THE SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CONTAINING

A FULL AND AMPLE EXHORTATION

TO THE

PURSUIT OF VIRTUE;

WITH

INSTRUCTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

HOW TO BECOME VIRTUOUS.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN SPANISH,

BY THE

REVEREND FATHER LEWIS, OF GRANADA,

PROVINCIAL OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINICK,

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AUTHOR's PREFACE.

SAY to the juſt man, it is well, Iſa. iii. 10. This is a meſſage from God delivered by the Prophet Iſaiah to all the juſt; it is the ſhorteſt in words and the moſt copious in bounty that could have been ſent. Men are uſually free in promiſing, but ſlow in performing; God, on the contrary, is ſo liberal and magnificent in performing, that all the expreſſions of his promiſes are infinitely ſhort of his actions. For what could be expreſſed ſhorter than the aforeſaid ſentence: *Say to the juſt man, it is well.* Yet how comprehenſive is this word *well?* which I conceive was therefore not enlarged upon or diſtinguiſhed, that men might be ſenſible no words were ſufficient fully to expreſs it, nor any diſtinction requiſite to declare what ſort of bleſſings were comprehended under this word *well*, which includes all that can be imagined. So that, as when Moſes aſked of God, what name he had; the anſwer was, *he that is*, without adding any other word, to ſhew that his being was not limited and bounded, but that it comprehended every being and perfection, which belongs to the ſaid Being without mixture of imperfection; ſo here he delivered this ſhort word *well*, without explaining of it, to ſignify that all the bleſſings the heart of man is capable of deſiring are contained under this promiſe, God makes to the juſt man in reward of his virtue, expreſſed by the ſingle monoſyllable *well.*

2. This is the main ſubject I deſign, by the help of God, to treat of in this book, adding ſuch rules and inſtructions as are proper to make a man virtuous.

Accordingly it ſhall be divided into two principal parts. The firſt will ſhew how much it is our duty to follow virtue, and the ineſtimable benefits and advantages we reap by ſo doing; the ſecond ſhall treat of a virtuous life, and preſcribe a method and directions for attaining of it. For there are two things requiſite towards making a man virtuous; the one is, that he really deſire to be ſuch; the other, that he know how to compaſs it. The firſt book ſhall anſwer the end of the former of theſe two points, the ſecond the latter; ſince, as Plutarch very well obſerves, "thoſe who excite us to virtue, and teach us not the way to it, are like thoſe that light a lamp, but put in no oil to feed the flame."

3. Though this ſecond part be ſo neceſſary, yet the firſt is much more abſolutely ſo, for the light and law of nature born with us teach us how to diſtinguiſh betwixt good and evil; but there are great contradictions and impediments proceeding from ſin, both within and without man, which obſtruct his loving the one and hating the other. For man being compoſed of ſpirit and fleſh, and each of theſe naturally inclining to its likeneſs, the fleſh ſeeks carnal things, in which vice is predominant, and the ſpirit ſpiritual things, in which virtue prevails. Thus the ſpirit ſuffers much contradiction from the fleſh, which regards nothing but what is delightful, and whoſe deſires and appetites are violent, ſince the guilt of original ſin broke the reigns of original juſtice which ſerved to curb them. Nor is it the fleſh alone that oppoſes the ſpirit, but the world, which, as St. John ſays, *is armed on all ſides with vice*, as alſo the devil, the mortal enemy of virtue, and the ill cuſtom or habit, become a ſecond nature, at leaſt in thoſe that have been long in it, and therefore it cannot be denied to be a matter of great difficulty, and which requires ſome aſſiſtance, to break through all theſe obſtacles and contradictions, and to deſire ſincerely and heartily to be virtuous in ſpite of the fleſh and all its confederates.

4. The

4. The deſign of the firſt of theſe two books is to give ſome aſſiſtance in this point, wherein I have uſed my utmoſt endeavours to bring all the arguments this work would admit of in behalf of virtue, ſhewing the great advantages that attend it both in this life and in the next, as alſo how much we are obliged to purſue it, becauſe God requires it of us, to whom our duty is ſo great, as well in regard to what he is in himſelf, as what he is towards us.

5. The motive I had to handle this ſubject was, that I ſaw moſt men extol virtue and follow vice, and conceived that, among many other cauſes which produced this evil, one was, that ſuch perſons did not underſtand the nature and properties of virtue, looking upon it as harſh, barren and dull, and therefore believing vice to be more delightful, they give themſelves wholly up to it, utterly caſting off virtue, which they ſuppoſe to be diſtaſteful. Being therefore concerned to ſee mankind thus deluded, I reſolved to take the pains here to deſcribe the ineſtimable worth, amiableneſs, dignity and beauty of this heavenly Spouſe, and to make appear how little ſhe is known, that this might undeceive and induce them to fall in love with what ſo well deſerves it. For if it be true that virtue is one of the moſt excellent things in Heaven or on earth, and which beſt merits love and eſteem, it is a great misfortune that man ſhould ſo little know and keep at ſuch diſtance from this great good; and therefore he does the public ſignal ſervice, who endeavours to reſtore this Lady to her honour, and ſeat her on her royal throne, ſince ſhe is ſovereign queen and miſtreſs of all things.

6. Before I enter upon it, I will ſhew by an example with what intention this work is to be read. The Heathens write of their renowned Hercules, that being grown up to thoſe years when men uſe to chooſe what courſe of life they will follow, he retired to a ſolitary place to conſider ſeriouſly upon this matter, where there occurred to him two diſtinct methods of living, the one of virtue, the other of pleaſure; and after weighing

weighing both of them maturely, he at laſt reſolved to follow the way of virtue and forſake that of delight. If any thing in this world requires good advice and a ſteady reſolution it is this ſame, for if we ſo often make reflection on thoſe things which are for the benefit of life, how much more application ought we to make for the buſineſs of life itſelf, eſpecially ſince in the world there are ſo many guides and ways of living.

7. This is it, Chriſtian reader, I would have you do, and what I invite you to, *viz.* that laying aſide for a ſhort time all the cares and buſineſs of the world, you withdraw yourſelf into this ſpiritual ſolitude, and diligently conſider what courſe of life you had beſt to ſteer. Remember that, among all worldly concerns, there is none requires more ſolicitude and a longer ſtudy than the choice of what life we are to follow, for if this be rightly inſtituted all other things will go right, and, on the contrary, if this be miſtaken every thing elſe will go wrong. So that to be right or wrong in other caſes concerns only particulars, this alone is univerſal and comprehends all. For what can be built upon an ill foundation? What will all other proſperities, and prudential acts ſignify, if life itſelf be diſorderly? Or what harm can all adverſities and miſtakes do, if life be duly formed? *What does it avail a man* (ſays our Saviour) *to gain the whole world, if he loſes himſelf, or ſuffers damage in his perſon?* Luke ix. 25. So that there is not, under the ſun, any buſineſs of more moment to be handled than this, nor is there any that more nearly concerns man, for it is not his honour or fortune that lies at ſtake here, but the life of his ſoul and everlaſting bliſs. Do not therefore read this curſorily as you do other things, turning over many leaves and haſtening to the end, but ſit down like a judge on the tribunal of your heart, and give ear to theſe words with ſilence and attention. This is no buſineſs to be done with precipitation, but requires much ſedateneſs, as treating of the whole buſineſs of life, and all that depends on it. Conſider how nice you are in examining worldly affairs,

ſince

ſince you will not ſtand to the judgment of one bench, but appeal to higher courts and judges, that they may not miſcarry. And ſince the matter you have in hand does not concern earth but Heaven, not the things belonging to you, but your own perſon, remember this is not to be handled negligently, as if you were half aſleep, but with much application. If hitherto you have been in the wrong, reckon yourſelf now newborn into the world; let us now call ourſelves to an account, let us wipe off all paſt miſcarriages and turn over a new leaf. O that you would now believe me, liſten to me attentively, and like an upright judge give ſentence according to what ſhall be alleged and made out! How happy would your choice be, how fortunate my labour?

8. I am ſenſible my wiſh is very great, and no pen is able to bring it to paſs, for which reaſon I here, in the beginning, beſeech him who is the virtue and wiſdom of his Father, and who has the keys of David to open and ſhut to whom he pleaſes, that he will be preſent with and inſtil himſelf into theſe words and give them ſpirit and life to move ſuch as ſhall read them. Yet if I reap no other fruit of my labour but the ſatiſfying my own deſire, in abundantly extolling ſo commendable a thing as virtue is, which I have long coveted, I ſhall look upon this alone as a ſufficient reward for all my labours. I have endeavoured in this, as in all my other works, to ſuit myſelf to all perſons, either ſpiritual or carnal, that ſince the neceſſity and cauſe is univerſal my writing may be ſo too. For good men by reading this book will be more confirmed in the love of virtue, and take deeper root in it; and thoſe who are not ſo will perhaps diſcover how great looſers they are in deviating from it. According to this doctrine good parents may educate their children from their infancy, that from thoſe tender years it may become habitual to them to honour, worſhip and follow virtue, for a virtuous child is one of the greateſt bleſſings a father can have.

9. This

9. This work may be alſo of great uſe to thoſe whoſe duty it is to inſtruct the people, and preach up virtue, becauſe the principal motives and inducements to oblige us to embrace it are here orderly ſet down, and whatſoever has been written upon this ſubject may be reduced to them as to common places. And for as much as we here ſpeak of the preſent advantages of grace promiſed to virtue, ſpecifying twelve ſingular privileges it enjoys, and that it is moſt certain all theſe riches and bleſſings were conferred on us through Jeſus Chriſt, therefore this doctrine is very beneficial for the better underſtanding thoſe books of holy writ, which particularly treat of the myſteries of Chriſt and the ineſtimable benefit of our redemption, ſuch as the Prophet Iſaiah, the Canticles, and the like.

THE CONTENTS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

PART THE FIRST.

Page

CHAP. I. *Of the first Motive that obliges us to Virtue and the Service of God, which is his Being considered in itself, and of the Excellency of his Divine Perfections,* 1

CHAP. II. *Of the second Motive that obliges us to Virtue and the Service of God, which is the Benefit of our Creation,* 11

CHAP. III. *Of the third Motive that obliges us to serve God, which is the Benefit of our Preservation and Direction,* 18

CHAP. IV. *Of the fourth Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is the inestimable Benefit of our Redemption,* 27

CHAP. V. *Of the fifth Motive that obliges us to Virtue, which is the Benefit of our Justification,* 36

CHAP. VI. *Of the sixth Motive that obliges us to the Love of Virtue, which is the Benefit of the Divine Predestination,* 48

CHAP. VII. *Of the seventh Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is Death, the first of the four last Things,* 52

CHAP. VIII. *Of the eighth Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is the last Judgment, the second of the last four Things,* 63

CHAP.

Page

CHAP. IX. *Of the ninth Motive that obliges us to Virtue, which is Heaven, the third of the four last Things,* 70

CHAP. X. *Of the tenth Motive that obliges us to the Love of Virtue, which is the fourth of the four last Things,* viz. *the Pains of Hell,* 80

PART THE SECOND.

CHAP. I. *Of the eleventh Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is the inestimable Advantages promised it in this Life,* 93

CHAP. II. *Of the twelfth Motive that obliges us to the Pursuit of Virtue, which is the particular Care the Divine Providence takes of the Good, in order to make them happy, and the Severity with which the same Providence punishes the Wicked—The first Privilege,* 102

CHAP. III. *Of the second Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *the Grace of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon holy Men,* 114

CHAP. IV. *Of the third Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *Supernatural Light and Knowledge,* 117

CHAP. V. *Of the fourth Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *the Consolations good Men receive from the Holy Ghost,* 125

CHAP. VI. *Of the fifth Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *the Peace of Conscience which the Just enjoy, and of the inward Remorse that torments the Wicked,* 138

CHAP. VII. *Of the sixth Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *the Hopes the Just have in God's Mercy, and of the vain Confidence of the Wicked,* 145

CHAP. VIII. *Of the seventh Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *the true Liberty which the Virtuous enjoy, and of the miserable and unaccountable Slavery the Wicked live in,* 155

CHAP. IX. *Of the eighth Privilege of Virtue,* viz. *the inward Peace and Calm the Virtuous enjoy, and of the miserable Restlessness and Disturbance the Wicked feel within themselves,* 173

CHAP. X. *Of the ninth Privilege, of Virtue* viz. *that God hears the Prayers of the Just, and rejects those of the Wicked,* 184

CHAP. XI. *Of the tenth Privilege of Virtue, which is the Assistance good Men receive from God in their Afflictions;*

and

Page

and of the Impatience, on the contrary, with which the Wicked ſuffer theirs, 189

CHAP. XII. *The eleventh Privilege of Virtue, which conſiſts in the Care God takes to ſupply the temporal Neceſſities of the Juſt,* 198

CHAP. XIII. *The twelfth Privilege of Virtue, which is the quiet and happy Death of the Virtuous; and, on the contrary, the deplorable End of the Wicked,* 204

PART THE THIRD.

CHAP. I. *Againſt the firſt Excuſe of thoſe who defer changing their Lives, and advancing in Virtue, till another time,* 220

CHAP. II. *Againſt thoſe Perſons who defer their Penance till the Hour of Death,* 232

CHAP. III. *Againſt thoſe who continue in their Sins, confiding in the Mercy of God,* 248

CHAP. IV. *Againſt thoſe Perſons, who excuſe themſelves from following Virtue, by ſaying the Way to it is rough and uneaſy,* 262

CHAP. V. *Againſt thoſe who refuſe to Walk in the Way of Virtue, becauſe they love the World,* 279

CHAP. VI. *The Concluſion of all that is contained in this Firſt Book,* 299

BOOK THE SECOND.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAP. I. *Of the firm Reſolution a good Chriſtian is to make, never to commit any mortal Sin,* 311

CHAP. II. *Remedies againſt Pride,* 316

CHAP. III. *Remedies againſt Covetouſneſs,* 324

CHAP. IV. *Remedies againſt Impurity,* 330

CHAP. V. *Remedies againſt Envy,* 339

Page

CHAP. VI. *Remedies againſt Gluttony,* 343

CHAP. VII. *Remedies againſt Anger, and the Hatred and Enmities which ariſe from it,* 346

CHAP. VIII. *Remedies againſt Sloth,* 350

CHAP. IX. *Of ſome other Sins which every good Chriſtian muſt endeavour to avoid,* 354

CHAP. X. *Of Venial Sins,* 361

CHAP. XI. *Of ſome other ſhorter Remedies againſt all Sorts of Sins, but particularly thoſe Seven, called Capital,* 363

PART THE SECOND.

CHAP. I. *Of three Kinds of Virtues, wherein conſiſts the Fulneſs of all Juſtice,* 370

CHAP. II. *Of Man's Duty to himſelf,* 371

CHAP. III. *Of Man's Duty towards his Neighbour,* 393

CHAP. IV. *Of Man's Duty to God,* 398

CHAP. V. *Of the Obligations of particular States and Callings,* 416

CHAP. VI. *Firſt Advice upon the Eſteem we are to have of the different Virtues, for the better Underſtanding the Rule of a good Life,* 419

CHAP. VII. *Of four neceſſary Inſtructions that follow upon this Doctrine,* 424

CHAP. VIII. *A ſecond Advice upon the different Ways of Living there are in the Church,* 434

CHAP. IX. *The third Advice of the Vigilance and Care every virtuous Man ought to live with,* 440

CHAP. X. *The fourth Advice of the Fortitude requiſite for the obtaining of Virtue.* 443

THE

THE ARGUMENT to the FIRST BOOK.

1. THIS firſt book, Chriſtian Reader, contains an ample exhortation to virtue, that is, to the keeping of God's commandments, wherein true virtue conſiſts. It is divided into three principal parts. The firſt is a perſuaſive to virtue, to this purpoſe making uſe of all thoſe arguments holy authors for the moſt part have brought upon this ſubject, which are our infinite obligations to Almighty God, as well in regard of what he is in himſelf as what he is to us, on account of his ineſtimable benefits, as alſo of what great conſequence virtue itſelf is to us, which is ſufficiently made out by man's four laſt things, death, judgment, hell and heaven, which is the ſubject of this firſt part.

2. The ſecond is to perſuade the ſame thing, but by other arguments, *viz.* The advantages of grace promiſed to virtue in this life; and here are ſet down twelve ſingular privileges belonging to it, every one of which is particularly diſcourſed of. Though holy authors ſometimes briefly hint at theſe privileges, ſpeaking of the peace, inward light, true liberty, comfort of a good conſcience, and conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, enjoyed by the juſt, and the uſual concomitants of virtue, yet I have not met with any body that has handled this ſubject at large and in due order. This has put me to ſome more labour in picking out and putting together all theſe matters out of ſeveral parts of the holy ſcriptures, giving them their proper names, placing them in order, and expounding and backing them with ſeveral other texts of ſcripture, and of the writings

writings of the holy fathers, which method was very requiſite to be uſed, to the end that thoſe who are not excited to the love of virtue, by the hope of bleſſings to come, as believing them too remote, may at leaſt be moved by the ineſtimable value of the advantages which at preſent attend it.

3. But becauſe it is not ſufficient to bring thoſe arguments that make for a cauſe, without confuting thoſe that may be alleged againſt it, therefore we have contrived the third part of this book, in which all the excuſes vicious men plead for avoiding virtue are anſwered and confuted.

4. Now that the reader may not be confounded, he is to underſtand, that this firſt book anſwers to the firſt of the Memorial of a Chriſtian Life, which, as well as this contains an exhortation to virtue; but that there it is ſhort, as became a memorial, but is here very large, ſolidly handling this neceſſary and noble ſubject, which is ſupported by all that has been piouſly wrote in the world. The ſecond book anſwers to the ſhort Rule of Chriſtian Life we gave there, which is here much dilated upon: and becauſe virtue is the ſubject of theſe books, the reader may obſerve, that by this word we do not only expreſs the habit of virtue, but the acts and duties, to which this noble habit tends, but it is no new thing to call the effect by the name of the cauſe, and the cauſe by that of the effect.

THE SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CONTAINING

A POWERFUL EXHORTATION to VIRTUE, and the keeping of GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

CHAP. I.

Of the first Motive that obliges us to Virtue and the Service of God, which is his Being, considered in itself, and of the Excellency of his Divine Perfections.

1. TWO things, Christian reader, particularly dispose the will of man to the undertaking of any commendable action. The consideration of duty and justice is the one; the other, the benefit and advantage we may reap by it. All wise men therefore agree that justice and profit are the two powerfulest inducements to incline our will to whatsoever it ought to undertake. Now though profit be more generally sought after, yet justice is in itself the most prevalent of the two; for, as Aristotle teaches, no worldly advantage can be equivalent to the excellency of virtue, nor any loss so great, as that a prudent man should not embrace it rather than decline to vice. The design of this book being to allure and incline men to affect the beauty of virtue, it will be proper to begin with this principal part, shewing how far we are obliged to it, on ac-

count of the duty we owe to God, who being goodneſs itſelf, commands, requires, nor aſks any thing in this world but that we be virtuous. Let us ſee in the firſt place, and ſeriouſly conſider on what grounds and for what reaſon Almighty God claims this duty of us.

2. But ſince theſe are innumerable, we ſhall here touch upon only ſix of the chiefeſt of them, on account of every one of which man owes all he is or can do: the firſt, greateſt and moſt inexplicable of them is the very Being of God, which comprehends the greatneſs of his infinite majeſty and of all his perfections; that is, the incomprehenſible immenſity of his goodneſs and mercy, of his juſtice, his wiſdom, his omnipotence, his excellency, his beauty, his fidelity, his ſweetneſs, his truth, his felicity, with the reſt of thoſe inexhauſtible riches and perfections that are contained in his divine eſſence. All which are ſo great and wonderful, that, according to St. Auguſtin, if the whole world were full of books, and each particular creature employed to write in them, and all the ſea turned into ink, the books would be ſooner filled, the writers ſooner tired, and the ſea ſooner drained than any one of his perfections could be fully expreſſed. The ſame Doctor ſays farther, that ſhould God create a new man with a heart as large and as capacious as the hearts of all men together, and he, by the aſſiſtance and favour of an extraordinary light, come to the knowledge of any one of his inconceivable attributes, the pleaſure and delight this muſt cauſe in him would quite overwhelm and make him burſt with joy, unleſs God were to ſupport and ſtrengthen him in a very particular manner.

3. This, therefore, is the firſt and chief reaſon, that obliges us to the love and ſervice of God. It is a point, ſo univerſally agreed upon, that the very Epicureans, who, by their denying of a Divine Providence, and the immortality of the ſoul, have ruined all philoſophy, never went ſo far, as to cut off all religion, which is nothing elſe but the worſhip and adoration we owe to God. For one of theſe philoſophers, diſcourſing upon this matter, in Cicero, Cic. de Nat. Deorum, brings very ſtrong and undeniable arguments to prove that there is a God; that this God is infinite in all his perfections, and deſerves, therefore, to be reverenced and adored, and that this duty would be incumbent on us, though God had no other title to it. If a king, even out of his own dominions, purely only for the dignity of his perſon, is treated with reſpect and honour,

honour, when we have no expectation of any favour from him; with how much more juſtice are we to pay the ſame duties to this King and Lord, who, as St. John ſays, has theſe words written upon his garment, and upon his thighs, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. This is he, *who with three fingers holds up the frame of the earth.* It is he, that diſpoſes the cauſes of all things; it is he that gives motion to the celeſtial orbs, that changes the ſeaſons, and that alters the elements. He it is that divides the waters, produces the winds, and creates all things. It is from him that the planets receive their force and influences. It is he, in fine, that as King and Lord of the univerſe, gives every creature its life and nouriſhment. And beſides all this, the kingdom he is in poſſeſſion of neither came to him by ſucceſſion, nor by election or inheritance, but by nature. And as man is naturally above an ant, ſo this noble Being is, in ſuch an eminent degree, above all created things whatſoever, that they and all the world together are ſcarce any more, in regard of him, than one of theſe inſects. If a philoſopher, ſo ill principled, as the Epicureans were, has acknowledged this truth, what ought we to do, who are brought up in the Chriſtian religion? A religion which teaches us, that, notwithſtanding the infinite obligations we have to God, we are more indebted to him, upon this account, than upon any other, ſo that if a man had a thouſand hearts and bodies, this reaſon alone ſhould be enough to make him offer them all to his honour and ſervice. This is a point which all the ſaints who have had a ſincere and diſintereſted love for him, have faithfully complied with. And therefore St. Bernard, upon this ſubject ſays, "True love is neither increaſed by hope, nor leſſened by diſtruſt:" Serm. 83. in Cantic. Hereby giving us to underſtand, that it is not the reward he expects that makes him ſerve God: but that he would go on ſtill with the ſame fervour, though he were ſure he ſhould never have any thing for it; becauſe he is not influenced by intereſt, nor wrought upon by any other conſideration, but that of the pure love which is due to this infinite goodneſs.

4. But though this, of all obligations is the greateſt, yet it is that which leaſt of all moves thoſe who are not perfect. Becauſe, the greater power ſelf-love has over them, the more they are carried on by their own intereſt; and, being as yet but rude and ignorant, they are unable to conceive the beauty and excellence of this ſupreme goodneſs. Whereas, were they but a little more enlightened, the very brightneſs of this di-

vine glory would charm them into a love of it above all other things. For which reaſon, it will be very proper to inſtruct them upon this matter, that they may acquire a more perfect knowledge of the majeſty of God. All I intend to make uſe of, for the effecting of this, ſhall be taken out of St. Denis, who wrote his Treatiſe of Myſtical Divinity with no other deſign, but to let us know how infinitely different God Almighty's excellencies and perfections are from thoſe of the creatures; that by ſeeing this, we may learn, if we have a mind to know what God is, the neceſſity of ſhutting our eyes to the beauties we obſerve in creatures for fear of deceiving ourſelves, whilſt we judge of God by thoſe things that bear no proportion at all with his greatneſs. We are to look upon them as mean and baſe, and to raiſe up our ſouls to the contemplation of a Being that exceeds all Beings; of a ſubſtance, above all other ſubſtances; of a light that eclipſes all other lights, and of a beauty which is ſo far beyond all beauties imaginable, that the greateſt of them and the moſt complete, is but uglineſs and deformity when ſet by this. This is what we are taught by the cloud Moſes entered into, for to diſcourſe with God, which removed every thing but God from him, that he might, by that means, have a better knowledge of God. Exod. xxiv. 16, 18. And Elias's covering his face with his cloak, when he ſaw the glory of God paſſing before him, is a lively expreſſion of the ſame thing. 3 Reg. xix. 13. It is certain then, that a man to contemplate the perfections and beauty of God, ſhould turn away his eyes from all the things of this world, as too baſe and mean to be regarded at the ſame time with them.

5. We ſhall underſtand this much better, if we conſider the vaſt difference betwixt this uncreated Being and all that are created; that is to ſay, betwixt the Creator and his creatures. For all theſe we ſee had a beginning, and may have an end: but he is without a beginning, and can have no end. They all acknowledge a ſuperior, and depend upon another; but he knows nothing above himſelf, and therefore is independent. The creatures are variable and inconſtant, but the Creator is always the ſame and cannot change. The creatures are compoſed of different matters, but the Creator is a moſt pure Being, and free from all thoſe mixtures which bodies are made up of; for ſhould he conſiſt of ſeveral parts, there muſt of neceſſity have been ſome Being above and before him to have ordered theſe parts, a thing altogether impoſſible. The creatures

tures can never come to ſuch a degree of perfection as not to admit of a farther increaſe: they may receive more than they have already, and know what they are at preſent ignorant of; but God can never be better than now he is, becauſe he contains within himſelf the perfections of all other beings: nor is it poſſible that he, who is the ſource of all riches, ſhould ever be richer. Nor can he know more than he does already, becauſe his wiſdom is infinite, and his eternity, which has all things preſent to it, ſuffers nothing to be concealed from his knowledge. Ariſtotle, the chief of all the heathen philoſophers, not ignorant of this truth, calls him a *pure act*; which is a complete and abſolute perfection, incapable of any farther addition; there being nothing imaginable above it, nor can we think of any thing it ſtands in need of. There is no creature in the world free from motion and change; and it is this that helps them in the finding of what they want, for they are all of them poor and needy. God, on the contrary, is fixed and immoveable; becauſe he is never expoſed to any kind of neceſſity, but is preſent in all places. There is, in all created things, ſome difference or other, by which one creature is to be eaſily known and diſtinguiſhed from another; but the purity of God's eſſence allows of no difference or diſtinction. So that his being is his eſſence, his eſſence is his power, his power is his will, his will is his underſtanding, his underſtanding is his being, his being is his wiſdom, his wiſdom is his juſtice, his juſtice his mercy. And though the effects of the one are contrary to thoſe of the other, becauſe the duty of mercy is to pardon, and that of juſtice to puniſh; they are notwithſtanding ſo perfectly one and the ſame thing in him, that his mercy is his juſtice, and his juſtice his mercy. So that to appearance, there are contrary perfections and qualities in God; but yet, as St. Auguſtin obſerves, there is no ſuch thing in effect, Medit. c. 19 & 29. becauſe he is very remote and yet very preſent, very beautiful and very ſtrong, conſtant and unconceivable, confined to no place, and in all places, ſeen by none, and yet ſeeing all, who changes every thing, whilſt he himſelf can never change. He it is who is always in action, and yet always enjoys an eternal reſt: it is he that fills all things, but cannot himſelf be circumſcribed; who provides for all without the leaſt ſolicitude; who is great without quantity, and conſequently immenſe; who is good without quality, and therefore truly and ſovereignly good; nay, what is yet more, *he only is good.* Mat. xix. 17. In fine, not to loſe

ourſelves

ourſelves in this abyſs, we may venture to ſay, that as all things are tied up to the bounds of a limited being, ſo they have a limited power beyond which they can never paſs. The works they are employed about are limited, the places they live in have their bounds, they have names to diſtinguiſh them by, and definitions by which we may know them, and are reducible to their particular kinds. But as for this ſupreme ſubſtance, it is as infinite in its power and in all its other attributes, as it is in its being. It is not known by any definition, nor comprehended under any kind, not confined to any place, nor diſtinguiſhed by any name. On the contrary, according to St. Denis, it has all names, though it has no name, becauſe it contains within itſelf all thoſe perfections which are ſignified by names. We may therefore ſay, that all creatures as they are limited are to be comprehended, whilſt this divine eſſence, in as much as it is infinite, is far above the reach of any created underſtanding. For, as Ariſtotle ſays, ſince that which is infinite has no end, it is not to be comprehended but by him alone who comprehends all things. What elſe could be the meaning of thoſe two ſeraphims Iſaiah ſaw near the majeſty of God, ſeated upon a high throne, each of which had ſix wings, with two of them they covered his face, and with two his feet, Iſa. vi. 12. Was it not to teach us, that theſe, which are of all the intellectual beings the moſt excellent, which poſſeſs the chief places in Heaven, and are ſeated the neareſt to God, are not capable of knowing perfectly what he is, though they have the favour to ſee him clearly in his very eſſence and in all his beauty? For as a man ſtanding on the ſhore ſees the ſea itſelf, yet cannot diſcover its depth or extent, ſo theſe bleſſed ſpirits, with all the ſaints in Heaven, ſee God truly and really, but can neither fathom the abyſs of his greatneſs nor meaſure the duration of his eternity. For this reaſon God is ſaid *to be ſeated upon the cherubims:* and though they are filled with treaſures of wiſdom, nevertheleſs to ſhew how ſhort they come of conceiving his majeſty or of underſtanding his eſſence, it is ſaid that he ſits upon them.

6. This is the darkneſs David ſpeaks of, when he ſays, *God has made his habitation in darkneſs:* Pſ. xvii. 12. To give us to underſtand what the Apoſtle has expreſſed more clearly, ſaying, *that God dwells in light inacceſſible,* 1 Tim. vi. 16. The Prophet calls light darkneſs, becauſe it dazzles our eyes ſo, that we cannot look againſt it to ſee God. And as, according to one of the philoſophers, there is nothing more reſplendent

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or viſible than the ſun, and nothing at the ſame time which we can leſs look at, becauſe of its extraordinary brightneſs and the weakneſs of our ſight; in like manner there is nothing more intelligible in itſelf than God is, and yet nothing for the ſame reaſon that we underſtand leſs in this life.

7. If, therefore, any man deſire to know what God is, when arrived at the higheſt degree of perfection he is capable of conceiving, he muſt with humility confeſs there is an infinite ſpace ſtill remains, that what he propoſed to himſelf is infinitely greater than he imagined; and that the more ſenſible he is of theſe incomprehenſibilities, the farther advance he has made in this ſublime ſcience. For this reaſon St. Gregory, writing upon thoſe words of Job, v. 9. *Who does great, and unſearchable, and wonderful things without number*, ſays thus, We never ſpeak better of the works of Almighty God, than when ſurpriſed with aſtoniſhment and raviſhed with wonder, we keep an awful ſilence. And as thoſe perſons who deſign to praiſe another, whoſe deſerts are beyond all they are able to ſay, think then they beſt diſcharge themſelves from their obligation when they ſay nothing at all; ſo ought we, in St. Denis's opinion, to reverence the wonders of this ſupreme Deity with a holy and profound reſpect of our ſouls, and with a chaſte and devout ſilence. The Saint ſeems herein to allude to thoſe words of David, *Thou, O Lord, art to be praiſed in Sion*, Pſ. lxiv. 2. which St. Jerom has tranſlated thus: "Thou, O God, art praiſed by ſilence in Sion;" to ſignify to us, that we cannot praiſe God in a more perfect manner than by ſaying nothing at all in praiſe of him, acknowledging the incapacity of our underſtanding, owning with humility, that this inexpreſſible ſubſtance is too high for us to conceive; and confeſſing that his being is above all beings, his power above all powers, his greatneſs above all greatneſſes, and that his ſubſtance infinitely excels, and is inconceivably different from all other ſubſtances, whether material or ſpiritual. Upon which St. Auguſtin ſays excellently well, "When I ſeek my God, I ſeek not the beauty of the body, nor the agreeableneſs of the ſeaſons, nor the brightneſs of the light, nor the ſweet charms of the voice, nor the odoriferous ſmell of flowers, perfumes and eſſences; it is neither manna, nor honey, nor any other thing that is pleaſing to the fleſh. I ſeek none of theſe things when I ſeek my God; and yet I ſeek a certain light not to be ſeen by the eyes, and exceeding all light, a voice beyond all voices, yet not to be diſcerned by the ears, a ſmell

ſurpaſ-

ſurpaſſing all ſmells, which the noſtrils are not capable of, a ſweetneſs more delightful than all ſweetneſs, yet unknown to the taſte, and a ſatisfaction above all ſatisfactions, that is not to be felt. For this light ſhines where there is no place, this voice ſounds where the air does not carry it away, this ſmell is perceived where the wind does not diſperſe it, this taſte delights where there is no palate to reliſh it, and this ſatisfaction is received where it is never loſt." L. 10. Conf. c. 6. Soliloq. c. 31.

SECTION I.

8. If none of theſe reaſons as weighty as they are, can give you the ſatisfaction you expect, of having ſome idea of this unſpeakable majeſty, caſt your eyes upon the frame of this material world, the work of God's own hands; that ſo, the contemplation of ſuch a noble effect may give you ſome inſight into the excellency of the cauſe. Pre-ſuppoſing in the firſt place with St. Denis, that in every thing there is a being, power and action, which bear ſuch proportion to one another, that the power is always ſuitable to the being, and the action to the power. This being pre-ſuppoſed, conſider the beauty, the order and extent of this world, ſince, as aſtronomers tell us, there are ſtars in heaven fourſcore times as big as the earth and ſea together. Conſider again, how many different ſorts of creatures there are upon the earth, in the water and in the air; you will ſee every thing ſo complete and perfect in its kind, monſters only excepted, that you can wiſh for nothing to be added or diſtinguiſhed to make its being more complete: and yet according to St. Auguſtin, who grounds his opinion on Eccleſiaſticus, xviii. 1. God in one ſingle moment created this world as great and wonderful as it is, drew a being from no being, and wrought this great work without any matter to work upon; without any help or aſſiſtance; without any outward draft or plat-form; without any tools or inſtruments; without any limits of either ſpace or time. He created the whole earth and all that is contained within the extent of the ſame, by one ſingle act of his will. Conſider farther, that God could have produced a thouſand worlds more, much fairer and larger than this, and much better peopled too, as eaſily as he created this; and that if he had made them, he could with as much eaſe, and without any kind of oppoſition, reduce them to nothing again.

Now,

Now, if according to our ſuppoſition taken from St. Denis, by the effects and operations of things we judge of their power, and by their power of their being; how powerful muſt that cauſe be which has produced ſuch wonderful effects? And if this power be ſo great, what muſt the being be, which we are to judge of by this power? This doubtleſs ſurpaſſes all expreſſion or imagination; and yet we are farther to conſider, that all theſe great and perfect works which are or might have been, are nothing at all in compariſon of the Divine power, but infinitely inferior to it: who then can reflect on or contemplate the greatneſs of ſo eminent a being and ſo high a power, without ſurprize and aſtoniſhment? Yet though we do not ſee with our corporal eyes, we cannot chooſe from what has been ſaid, but conceive in ſome meaſure how great and incomprehenſible this power is.

9. St. Thomas, in his Sum of Divinity, explains this infinite greatneſs very clearly by this example: we ſee, ſays he, that in material and corporal things that which is the moſt perfect is the greateſt in quantity. Thus the water is greater than the earth, the air is greater than the water, and the fire greater than the air. The firſt heaven is greater than the element of fire; the ſecond heaven greater than the firſt; the third than the ſecond; and ſo of the reſt, till you come to the tenth ſphere or empyreal heaven, which is of unmeaſurable greatneſs. This will appear much plainer yet, if we conſider but what proportion the ſea and earth joined together have with the heavens; for aſtronomers tell us, they are both but as a point in compariſon of them; which they prove by this demonſtration. They divide the heavens equally into twelve ſigns, through which the ſun performs its yearly courſe; and becauſe a man may always ſee ſix of theſe ſigns in whatſoever part of the earth he be, they conclude that the earth is but as a point or a ſheet of paper in the middle of the world; for, if its extent could be, though ever ſo little compared with that of the heavens, we ſhould not be able to diſcover half of them at once in any part of the earth whatſoever. Now, if the empyreal orb, the moſt excellent and moſt noble of all material ſubſtances, is ſo incomparably bigger than all the other orbs; we may from thence infer, that God who is above all beings imaginable, whether corporal or ſpiritual, as being the author of them all, muſt be infinitely greater than all of them together; not in quantity, for he is a pure ſpirit, but in the excellency and perfection of his being.

10. But

10. But to come more home to our ſubject, you may I ſay, by this means know in ſome manner what God's perfections are, becauſe they cannot but bear a proportion to his being. The author of the book called Eccleſiaſticus, ſpeaking of God's mercy, ſays, *His mercy is as great as himſelf.* Eccl. ii. 23. Nor are any of his other attributes leſs. So that his goodneſs, his mercy, his majeſty, his meekneſs, his wiſdom, his bounty, his excellency, his omnipotence and his juſtice are all entirely equal. Thus he is infinitely good, infinitely merciful, infinitely wiſe, infinitely amiable, and upon theſe conſiderations moſt infinitely worthy to be obeyed, reſpected, reverenced and feared by all creatures. Nay, were man's heart capable of an infinite love and fear, juſtice would oblige him to give it all to God upon the account of his infinite greatneſs. For, if the greater quality a perſon is of, the more reſpect we are to ſhew him; we ought to pay God an infinite reſpect, becauſe his excellence is infinite. Whatſoever therefore our love wants of acquiring this degree, is wanting upon no other account but our inability of making God the returns his boundleſs greatneſs deſerves.

11. Since then it is certain, that were there no other conſideration but that alone, it would be a ſufficient motive to oblige us to the love of God; what can he be in love with who does not love this goodneſs? Or what can he be afraid of who does not fear this infinite majeſty? Whom will he ſerve who will not ſerve this Lord? What was our will given us for, but to love and to embrace good? If therefore this great God be the ſovereign good, why does not our will embrace it before all other goods? If it is an unhappineſs and miſery not to love him, nay, and that too, above all things in the world; what ſhould thoſe perſons expect who love every thing elſe better than they do him? Who would ever have thought that man could carry his ingratitude and malice ſo far? and yet, what do they leſs who are continually offending this ſovereign goodneſs, for a beaſtly pleaſure, for a trifling punctilio of honour, or for ſome vile and ſordid intereſt? What then ſhall we think of them, who ſin upon no motive at all, but either out of meer malice or cuſtom; and without the leaſt hope of advantage or profit? Yet this paſs mankind is now come to. O unparalleled blindneſs and folly! O inſenſibility, worſe than that of brutes! O the diabolical raſhneſs and impudence of man! What puniſhment does he not deſerve that lets himſelf be carried away by ſuch a crime as this is? What torments ought not

not he to expect, who has the boldneſs to deſpiſe ſo high a majeſty? Such an unhappy ſoul ſhall, without doubt, be condemned to thoſe pains and torments that have been prepared for it; which are to be burning with the devils in hell for all eternity. A puniſhment far leſs than ſuch offences deſerve.

12. This is the firſt and chiefeſt reaſon, that obliges us to the love and ſervice of God. An obligation ſo cloſe and ſtrict, that there is nothing in the world can oblige us to love the creatures, becauſe of their perfections, which is to be called an obligation, if we compare it with this. For as the perfections of the creatures are but mere imperfections, in compariſon with the perfections of God; ſo all the obligations that proceed from theſe perfections and excellencies, cannot with any juſtice be called obligations, if you ſet them againſt thoſe we owe to God: nor can the offences we commit againſt the creatures, be properly accounted ſuch, if we but conſider thoſe we are guilty of towards God. This is the reaſon why David, in his Penitential Pſalm, cries out, *Againſt thee alone*, meaning God, *have I ſinned:* Pſ. l. 5. Though at the ſame time he had ſinned againſt Urias, whom he murdered, againſt Urias's wife, whom he ſeduced, and againſt all his ſubjects in the ſcandal his bad example gave them; and yet after all, he declared he had ſinned againſt God alone, looking upon all thoſe other offences as nothing at all, if compared with thoſe he had committed againſt the law of God. This crime ſo afflicted him, that he took no notice of the reſt. For as God is infinitely greater than all the creatures; ſo the obligations we have to ſerve him, and the offences we commit againſt his divine majeſty, are infinitely greater too, there being no compariſon nor proportion between finite and infinite.

CHAP. II.

Of the ſecond Motive that obliges us to Virtue and the Service of God, which is the Benefit of our Creation.

1. ANOTHER obligation we have to the purſuit of virtue, and the keeping of God's commandments, beſides his being in itſelf, is the conſideration of what he is towards us, that

that is, of thoſe innumerable favours we have received from him, which though we have ſpoke of elſewhere upon other occaſions, we will nevertheleſs treat of them again, that ſo we may the better underſtand how much we are obliged to this liberal benefactor.

2. The firſt of theſe benefits is our creation, which being ſo well known, I will only ſay that ſuch a favour is of itſelf ſufficient to oblige man to give himſelf up entirely to the ſervice of his Creator, becauſe in juſtice he ſtands indebted for all he has received; and ſince by this benefit he has received his being, that is, his body with all its ſenſes, and his ſoul with all its faculties; it follows he is obliged to employ them all in the ſervice of his Creator, under the penalty of being looked upon as ungrateful to ſo bountiful a benefactor. For if a man builds a houſe, who ſhould have the uſe or the rent of it, but he that built it? If a man plants a vine, who elſe ſhould have the fruit of it but the planter? If a man has any children, who are they obliged to ſerve, but the father that begot them? This obligation is ſo ſtrict, that the laws themſelves give every father a right and power to ſell his own children, if he ſhould be reduced to a very preſſing neceſſity. For his having given them their being, makes his authority over them ſo abſolute that he may diſpoſe of them as he pleaſes. What power then and authority ought he to have, who is the ſovereign maſter and author of all creatures, both in heaven and on earth, ſince the power a father has over his children, extends ſo far? And if thoſe perſons who receive a favour, are, according to Seneca, obliged to imitate a good ſoil which returns with intereſt what it receives, how ſhall we be able to make God any ſuch return, when after having given him all we have, we can give no more than what we have received from him? And if he who gives back but juſt what he received, does not comply with this precept of the philoſopher, what ſhall we ſay of him that does not return ſo much as the leaſt part of it? Ariſtotle tells us, it is impoſſible for a man to make equal returns to the favours his father and the gods have beſtowed on him. How then can it be poſſible for us to make any return to this great God, who is the father of all fathers, and from whom mankind has received infinitely more than from all the fathers in the world together. If for a ſon to diſobey his father is ſo heinous a ſin, how grievous a crime muſt our rebellion be againſt God, who has ſo many titles to the name of a father, that in compariſon with

with him no father deſerves to be ſo called. And therefore he with much reaſon complains of this ingratitude by one of his Prophets, in theſe words: *If I am your Father, where is my honour? And if I am your Lord, where is my fear?* Mal. i. 6. It is upon account of the ſame ingratitude that he expreſſes his indignation in another place, with much more ſeverity and anger, ſaying, *Is it thus that you requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe nation? Is not he thy Father that has taken thee into his poſſeſſion, and has made and created thee?* Deut. xxxii. 6. Theſe are truly the ungrateful creatures that never lift up their eyes towards Heaven to contemplate on it, nor look down to conſider themſelves. Did they but enter into this conſideration they would ſoon inform themſelves what they are, and deſire to have ſome knowledge at leaſt of their original. They would be willing to know by whom and for what end they have been created, that they might by this means be acquainted with one part of their duty. But having already neglected the one, they eaſily neglect the other, and live as if they had made and created themſelves. This was the crime of that unfortunate king of Egypt, whom God threatened ſo ſeverely by his Prophet, when he ſent him this meſſage: *Behold, O Pharaoh, king of Egypt, it is to thee that I ſpeak, thou great dragon, that lieſt down in the midſt of thy rivers, and ſayeſt: The river is mine, and I have made myſelf.* Theſe words if they are not in the mouths, are at leaſt in the hearts of thoſe who think as ſeldom of their Creator as if they themſelves were the authors of their own being, and would acknowledge no other. St. Auguſtin's ſentiments were quite different from theſe mens, for the knowledge of his own origin brought him to the knowledge of him from whom he had received it. Hear how he ſpeaks in one of his ſoliloquies: "I returned to myſelf and entered into myſelf, ſaying, What are thou? And I anſwered myſelf, a rational and a mortal man. And I began to examine what this was, and ſaid, O my Lord and my God, who is it that has created ſo noble a creature as this is? Who, O Lord, but thou? Thou, O my God, haſt made me and not I myſelf. What art thou? Thou by whom I and all things live. Can any body create and make himſelf? Can he receive his being and his life from any one elſe but from thee? Art not thou the chief being from whom every other being comes? Art not thou the fountain of life, from which all lives flow? For whatſoever has life lives by thee, becauſe nothing can live without thee.

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It is thou, O Lord, that haſt made me, and without thee nothing is made. Thou art my Creator and I am thy creature. I thank thee, O my Lord and my God, becauſe thou haſt created me: Thou by whom I live, and by whom all things live. I thank thee, O my Creator, becauſe thy hands have made and faſhioned me. I thank thee, O my light, for having enlightened and brought me to the knowledge of what thou art, and what I am myſelf."

3. This is the firſt favour we have received from God, and the foundation of all the reſt, becauſe all other benefits preſuppoſe a being, and this is firſt given us at our creation. Nay, there is no benefit but has as near a relation to our being as the accidents of a thing to the ſubſtance of it; by which you may ſee how great a benefit this is, and how deeply you are indebted to God for it. If then it is certain that God is very careful and exact in requiring ſome acknowledgment for all the benefits he beſtows on us, not out of any intereſt or advantage to himſelf, but only for our good; what acknowledgment do we think he will expect from us for that favour, upon which all others are built? For God is no leſs rigorous in exacting of our thanks than he is liberal in conferring of his graces: not that he gets any thing by it, but becauſe the performance of our duty is ſo very advantageous to us. Thus we read in the Old Teſtament, that God no ſooner beſtowed any grace upon his people, than he commanded them not to forget the ſame. As ſoon as he had brought his Iſraelites out of the ſlavery of Egypt, Exod. xii. he immediately commanded them to keep a ſolemn feaſt every year, in remembrance of that happy day. He deſtroyed all the firſt born of the Egyptians, but at the ſame time, to prevent his people's ingratitude, he gave orders that in return for ſo ſignal a favour they ſhould offer up all their firſt born to him. A little after their departure from Egypt, Exod. xvi. 33. when he firſt rained down the manna from Heaven, a food with whichhe maintained them for forty years in the wilderneſs, he ordered immediately that a certain quantity of it ſhould be put into a veſſel and kept in the ſanctuary as a remembrance to all their poſterity of ſo extraordinary a mercy. Exod. xvii. 14. After the victory which he gave them over the Amalekites, he bids Moſes write it down in a book for a memorial, and deliver the ſame to Joſhua. Now if God has been ſo exact in requiring that his people ſhould never forget thoſe temporal favours he done them, what will he not expect from us for this

this immortal one? For ſince the ſoul he has given us is immortal, the benefit we receive with it muſt be ſo to. It was this that introduced the cuſtom amongſt the old Patriarchs, of erecting altars as often as God had favoured them in any particular manner. Gen. xii. 7, 8. xiii. 18. xxii, &c. Nay, the very names they gave their children expreſſed the favours they had received, that ſo they might always be mindful of them. Hence St. Auguſtin took occaſion to ſay, that man ought to think of God every time he fetches his breath. Soliloq. c. 18. Manuale c. 29. Medit. c. 6. Becauſe as it is by the means of his being that he lives, he ſhould be continually giving God thanks for this immortal being which he has had from the Divine mercy.

4. We are ſo ſtrictly obliged to the performance of this duty, that it is the advice even of worldly philoſophers never to be ungrateful to God. Hear how Epictetus, a very noted ſtoic, ſpeaks upon this matter. "Have a care, ſays he, O man, of being ungrateful to that ſovereign power, and forgetting to return thanks not only for having given you all your ſenſes and life itſelf, but for all thoſe things that ſupport it; not only for the pleaſant fruits, for the wine, the oil, and for whatever other advantages of fortune you have received from him; but praiſe him particularly for having endued you with reaſon, by which you may know how to make that uſe of every thing which it ought to be put to, and underſtand the true worth and excellency of all things." If a Heathen philoſopher obliges us to ſuch acknowledgments for theſe common and ordinary things, what ſentiments of gratitude ſhould a Chriſtian have, who has beſide all theſe received the light of faith, which is a moſt ineſtimable favour?

5. But you will perhaps aſk me what obligations can theſe benefits lay upon me, which are common to all and ſeem rather to be the ordinary graces of God; ſince they are nothing but the conſequences and products of ſuch cauſes as work always after the ſame manner. This objection is ſo much below a Chriſtian, that a Heathen would be aſhamed to make it, and none but a beaſt can be guilty of ſuch baſeneſs. That you may the more eaſily believe me, hear how the ſame philoſopher condemns it. "You will ſay perhaps that you receive all theſe benefits from nature. Senſeleſs and ignorant creature that you are! do not you ſee that when you ſay ſo, you only change the name of God? For what is nature but God, who is the author of nature? It is therefore no excuſe, ungrateful

grateful man, to ſay you owe this obligation to nature, not to God, becauſe without God there is no ſuch thing as nature. Should you borrow a ſum of money of Lucius Seneca, and afterwards ſay you were obliged only to Lucius, and not to Seneca, that would only change your creditor's name, but not your creditor.

SECTION I.

Of another Part of this Motive that obliges us to the Service of God, which is, that we are to receive our Perfection from him.

6. It is not juſtice alone that obliges us to the ſervice of our Creator: our own neceſſities force us to addreſs ourſelves to him, if we deſire to arrive at the happineſs and perfection of our being, which is the end of our creation. For the better underſtanding hereof you muſt conceive that generally ſpeaking whatever is born is not born with all its perfections; it has ſomething, but it wants much more yet, and none but he that began the work can rightly finiſh it. So that no being can be perfected by any other cauſe than that which put the firſt hand to it. This is the reaſon why all effects have an inclination and tendency towards thoſe particular cauſes which produced them, that they may receive their laſt ſtroke and perfection from them. The plants love the ſun, and run as deep as they can into the earth which ſhot them forth. The fiſhes continue in the waters where they were firſt ingendered. A chicken runs under the hen's wings as ſoon as it is hatched, and follows her up and down for ſhelter. A lamb as ſoon as it is brought forth runs after its ewe, and can diſtinguiſh her from a thouſand others of the ſame colour. It follows her without ever loſing ſight of her, and ſeems to ſay, Here it is I received whatſoever I have, and it is here I will receive whatſoever I want. This is what uſually happens in the works of nature, and if thoſe of art had any ſenſe and motion they would do the ſame. Should a painter draw a piece and leave out the eyes, what would it do were it ſenſible of its wants? whither would it go? Not to the palaces of kings or princes, who as ſuch could never be able to ſupply its defects, but to the maſter's houſe, that he who drew the firſt ſtrokes might give the laſt and finiſh it quite. Is not this your own caſe, O rational creature? You are not yet finiſhed.

finiſhed. You have, it is true, received ſomething, but there is a great deal yet wanting to make you as complete and perfect as you ſhould be. You are ſcarce any more than a rough draught. You have received nothing of the beauty and luſtre you are to have. This you will be very ſenſible of, if you do but obſerve the propenſion of nature itſelf, which being always in want never reſts, but is continually craving and wiſhing for more. God thought fit to ſtarve you out, that your own wants might force you to have recourſe to him. For this reaſon it was he left you at firſt unfiniſhed. His not giving you at your creation all that you ſtood in need of, was an effect not of covetouſneſs, but of love. It was not to leave you poor, but to make you humble. It was not to forſake you in your neceſſities, but to oblige you to addreſs yourſelf to him. For ſince you are really poor and blind, why do you not go to the father that made you, and to the painter that firſt began to draw you, that they may give you what you have not yet received? Conſider whether David did not underſtand this ſecret, when he ſaid, *Thy hands, O Lord, have made and faſhioned me: give me underſtanding and I will learn thy commandments.* Pſ. cxviii. 73. As if he had ſaid, all that is in me is the work of thy hands, O Lord, but thy work is not yet completed. I am not quite finiſhed, O Lord, becauſe the eyes of my ſoul are not yet opened. I have not light enough to ſee what is convenient for me. Whom ſhall I have recourſe to for the obtaining what I want, unleſs to him that has given me what I have? Grant me, O Lord, that light which is neceſſary for me. Enlighten the eyes of this wretch that has been born blind, that he may ſee thee, and that thou, O God, mayeſt finiſh what thou haſt already begun in me.

7. As therefore there is none but this great God that can perfect the underſtanding, ſo neither is there any beſide him that can complete and rectify the will, with all the other faculties of the ſoul; that ſo he who firſt began the work may finiſh it. It is this Lord alone who ſatisfies without leaving any want, who enlarges without noiſe, who enriches without vanity, and gives a ſolid contentment, without poſſeſſing many things: with him the creature lives though poor, yet content; though rich, yet deſtitute; though alone, yet happy; though deprived of all things, yet poſſeſſing all. It is upon this occaſion the wiſeman ſays, with ſo much reaſon, *There is one that is rich, as it were, though he has nothing; and there is*

one that is, as it were, poor, though he is very rich. Prov. xiii. 7. By this we are taught, that the poor man who has God for his inheritance, as St. Francis had, is truly rich, and that he whom God takes no notice of is very poor, let him be ever so rich in worldly possessions.

What advantage have great and wealthy men by all their riches, if they are nevertheless racked with such care and discases, that all they have cannot give them any ease? Or what comfort can rich clothes, a plentiful table and chests crammed with gold and treasures, bring an unquiet and troubled mind? How often and with what restlesness does the rich man turn and toss about every night in his down-bed; nor can all his wealth help him to the least wink of sleep, or give any rest to his disturbed conscience? It follows upon what has been said, that we are infinitely obliged to serve God, not only upon the account of this benefit, but for whatsoever else contributes towards the making of our happiness complete.

CHAP. III.

Of the third Motive that obliges us to serve God, which is the Benefit of our Preservation and Direction.

1. ANOTHER obligation man has to God besides that of his creation, is the care he takes to preserve him. He it is who gave you your being, and who still continues the same to you. So that you depend now as much upon his power, for the preserving of it, as you did before he gave it you, for the receiving of it; and it is as impossible for you to subsist without him, as it was before you were created to create yourself. Nor is this second obligation less than the first, but rather greater, for that was laid upon you but once; whereas this is conferring on you every moment of your life. For, to be continually preserving you after your creation, requires no less love nor power than it did to create you. If therefore your obligation to him for having created you in an instant be so great, what do you not owe him for preserving you so many moments, so many hours, nay, so many years? You cannot go a step unless he gives you power to move. You cannot so much as open or shut your eyes without his will and assistance. For if you do not believe it is he that moves every joint and member

member of your body, you are no Chriſtian; but if you believe it is from him you receive this favour, and yet after all are ſo impudent as to offend him, I cannot tell what name to give you. If a man were ſtanding on the top of a high tower with a ſmall cord in his hand, and another man hanging at the end of it, do you think that he, who ſhould be ſo near falling down headlong, would dare to give any abuſive language to the perſon that held the cord? Imagine yourſelf to be in ſuch a condition. You depend on the will of God, as it were, on a thread; ſo that ſhould he forſake you but for one moment, you would be inſtantly reduced to your firſt nothing. With what inſolence then can you dare to provoke ſo dreadful a majeſty, which is ſo merciful as to ſupport you, even then when you ſin againſt it? For, as St. Denis ſays, ſuch is the virtue of the ſovereign good, as to give the creatures power to diſobey and rebel at the very moment they are rebelling againſt it. Since there is no denying of this truth, how dare you preſume to make uſe of thoſe ſenſes and members, as inſtruments to offend him that preſerves them? O incredible blindneſs and folly! O unheard of rebellion and diſobedience! Was there ever ſo horrid a conſpiracy as this is, that the members ſhould riſe up againſt their head, for which they ought to die a thouſand times? The day will come when this affront ſhall be moſt ſeverely puniſhed. It is then that God will hear thoſe complaints, which his own honour trampled under foot by you, ſhall make to his divine juſtice. Diſloyal and ungrateful man, is it not juſt, ſince you have conſpired againſt your God, that the whole world ſhould riſe up and rebel againſt you? That God ſhould arm all his creatures to revenge the injuries you have offered him, and that the whole earth ſhould fight for him againſt the ungrateful. Without doubt, there is no greater juſtice than that they who would not open their eyes to ſo many mercies, when they might have done it, ſhould be forced to it now by ſeverity and rigour, without finding any remedy or comfort.

2. If to all theſe benefits we add the whole world, which is as a rich and plentiful table God has prepared and ſpread for your particular uſe, how infinitely will the obligation be increaſed? There is not any one thing under the face of heaven but what is intirely for man or for his ſervice. And ſhould any one object that flies are of no uſe to man, he may obſerve, they are food for birds which are created for him. Though a man does not eat the graſs in the fields, it nouriſhes

the cattle which are neceſſary for his ſubſiſtence. Caſt your eye about the world, and you will ſee what rich lands and what large poſſeſſions you have, and how great your inheritance is. All that moves on the earth, all that ſwims in the waters, that flies in the air, or that ſhines in the heavens, is made for you. Theſe things are all of them the effects of God's bounty, the works of his providence, the marks of his beauty, the witneſſes of his mercy, the ſparks of his charity, and the common publiſhers of his greatneſs. Conſider theſe are ſo many preachers God ſends to you, that you may not want the opportunity of knowing him. Every thing, ſays St. Auguſtin, on earth and in heaven, perpetually exhorts me, O Lord, to love you. And that no man may pretend to a lawful excuſe from ſo juſt a duty, they ſpeak the ſame language to every body elſe.

3. O! that you had but ears to hear the voices of the creatures, you would eaſily underſtand how they all agree in their inviting you to the love of God; for they ſilently declare they have been created to ſerve you: that you may therefore love and adore this common Lord, not only for yourſelf but for them. The ſky ſays, It is I that by my ſtars continually furniſh you with light, that you may not walk in the dark. It is I that by my different influences occaſion the production of all things neceſſary for life. The air, on the other ſide, tells you, It is I who give you breath; it is I who refreſh you with my gentle blaſts and temper the heat of your vital ſpirits, that you may not be ſcorched up by it; it is I who maintain this almoſt infinite number of different kinds of birds, pleaſing your eyes with the beauty of their feathers, charming your ears with the ſweetneſs of their notes, and ſatisfying the niceneſs of your appetite with their delicious taſte. The water ſays, It is for you that I pour out my ſeaſonable and moderate rains; it is for you that my ſtreams and fountains are always running; it is for your nouriſhment that I engender ſuch variety of fiſh. I water your lands and your gardens, that they may bring you their fruits in due ſeaſon. I make a ſhort paſſage for you through the ſea, that you may thereby have the opportunity of making uſe of the whole world, and of joining the riches of other countries with thoſe of your own. What ſhall I ſay of the earth, the common mother of all things, and the univerſal ſhop, as it were, of nature; where all the different cauſes produce their ſeveral effects? She may, with a great deal of reaſon ſpeak to you, as the reſt have done,

and

and tell you, it is ſhe, that like a mother, carries you in her arms; it is ſhe that ſupplies you with all the neceſſaries of life; it is ſhe that maintains you with the variety of her products; that to ſerve you, ſhe holds a correſpondence with all the other elements, and with the heavens themſelves, for the procuring of their influences; and that ſhe, in ſhort, like a tender mother, neither forſakes you whilſt you are alive, nor leaves you at your death; for ſhe it is that nouriſhes and ſupports you during your life, and takes you into her boſom when you are dead, and there gives you a reſting place. To conclude, all the world cries out aloud to you, Behold, O mortal man, and conſider what a love your Creator has had for you; ſince it is for your ſake that he has made me, commanding me at the ſame time, for the love of him to ſerve you; that ſo you may love and ſerve him, who has created me for you, and you for himſelf.

4. This, O Chriſtian, this is the general voice of all the creatures; and can you after this deny that you are moſt ſtrangely dull and ſtupid, if you have no ears to hear the ſame? How can you chooſe, but confeſs that you are guilty of an unparalleled ingratitude, if you take no notice of ſo many favours? If you are not aſhamed to receive an obligation, why do you refuſe to make a ſimple acknowledgment of it to the perſon from whom you have received it, that ſo you may eſcape the puniſhment your ingratitude will otherwiſe deſerve? For, according to a famous writer, there is no creature in the world but what ſpeaks theſe three words to man: "Receive, give, take heed; that is to ſay, receive the benefit, give what is due, and take heed of the puniſhment which follows ingratitude, if you do not do ſo." Rich. de S. Vict.

5. And that you may have more cauſe to admire, conſider how Epictetus, a Heathen philoſopher before mentioned, has been able to lift himſelf up to this ſublime divinity. He adviſes us in theſe words, to make the creatures ſerve us, as ſo many memorials of the Creator:

"When the raven croaks," ſays he, "and thereby gives you notice of ſome change of weather, it is God, not the raven, that gives you this notice. If men ſhould, by their words and diſcourſe, adviſe you to any thing, is it not God that has given them power to adviſe you thus? thereby to let you underſtand, that he exerciſes his Divine power ſeveral ways, in order to bring about his deſigns; for when God thinks fit to acquaint us with matters of greater moment, he makes choice

of

of more excellent and more inſpired men for this purpoſe."— Afterwards, he adds this, "In fine, when you ſhall have read my inſtructions, ſay to your ſelf, it is not Epictetus, but God, that has given me this advice; for whence could he have had ſuch precepts and rules as theſe are, if God had not ſuggeſted them to him?" Thus far are the words of Epictetus. Now, is there any Chriſtian in the world that will not be aſhamed, and bluſh to be outdone by a Heathen? If there be, he may well be confounded to think that his eyes, with the aſſiſtance of the light of faith, cannot ſee as far as thoſe that were in the darkneſs of human reaſon.

SECTION I.

From what has been ſaid is inferred, how unworthy a Thing it is not to ſerve God.

6. Since things are really juſt, as we have repreſented them, is it not a great ingratitude and neglect for a man to be ſurrounded on all ſides by ſo many benefits, and yet to forget him from whom he has received them all? St. Paul ſays, *that he who does his enemy a good turn, heaps coals of fire upon his head*, Rom. xii. 20. by which he inflames his charity and love. Now, if all the creatures in the world are ſo many benefits God beſtows on you, the whole world can be nothing elſe but one fire, and all the creatures ſo much fuel to feed and increaſe it. Is it poſſible any heart ſhould be in the midſt of ſuch flames as theſe, and not be intirely inflamed, nor ſo much as warmed by them? How comes it about that, after receiving ſo many benefits and graces, you ſhould neglect, even to caſt your eyes up towards Heaven to ſee from whence they all come? If you were to go a great journey, and in the way being quite tired out and almoſt dead for hunger, ſhould be forced to ſit down at the bottom of a high tower, from the top of which ſome charitable perſon ſhould take care to ſupply you with whatſoever you wanted; could you forbear looking up ſometimes, if it were but to have a ſight of one that was ſo kind and charitable to you? Does God do any thing leſs for you, than continually ſhower down from above all ſorts of bleſſings upon you? Find me out, if you can, but one thing in the world that does not happen by a particular providence of his. And yet you never ſo much as look up to know, and by that means to love, ſo liberal and conſtant a benefactor. What can be ſaid of ſuch hardheartedneſs, but that man has di-

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veſted himſelf of his own nature, and is grown more inſenſible than brutes? It is a ſhame to ſay whom we reſemble in this particular, but it is fit man ſhould hear his own. We are like a herd of ſwine feeding under an oak, which all the while their keeper is ſhaking down the acorns from the top of the tree, do nothing elſe but grunt and fight with one another for their meat, without ever looking upon him that gives it them, or lifting up their eyes to ſee from whoſe hands they receive ſuch a benefit. O! the brutiſh ingratitude of the children of Adam! who having received not only a rational ſoul, which other creatures have not, but alſo an upright body, and eyes ſet to look up toward Heaven, yet will not lift up the eyes of your ſoul to behold him that beſtows ſuch bleſſings on you.

7. It is to be wiſhed that brutes and irrational creatures did not outdo us in this point. For this duty of acknowledgment is in effect ſo deeply engraved by the finger of God upon all his creatures, that the very fierceſt of them have not been deprived of ſo noble an inclination. There are a great many examples in hiſtory to prove what we here aſſert. Is there any beaſt more fierce than a lion? And yet Appian, a Greek author, tells us of a man who, having accidentally ſheltered himſelf in a lion's cave, and there plucking a thorn out of one of his feet, ſhared with him every day in the prey he got, as an acknowledgment of the favour and the cure he had wrought upon the beaſt. This man was taken up a conſiderable time after for ſome notorious crime, and condemned to be expoſed to the wild beaſts in the amphitheatre at Rome, to be torn in pieces by them. The ſame lion which had been take ſome days before being let looſe, eyed the man and knowing him, came up gently and fawned upon him, juſt as a dog does upon his maſter when he has been abroad, and ever after followed him up and down without doing any harm. We read of another lion, who, having received the ſame favour from a ſeaman that had been caſt by a ſtorm upon the coaſt of Africa, brought him daily a part of his booty, which maintained him and his company until ſuch time as they put to ſea again. Nor is that leſs to be admired, which they tell us of another, who, as he was fighting one day with a ſerpent, was ſo put to it, that in all appearance he would have loſt his life, had not a gentleman who was riding that way accidentally come in to his aſſiſtance and killed the ſerpent. The lion, to return the obligation, gave himſelf up intirely to his deliverer, and followed

followed him whitherſoever he went, ſerving him as a hound in hunting. The gentleman at laſt took ſhipping and left his lion on ſhore. The beaſt was ſo impatient and uneaſy to ſtay behind, that he took to the water, and not being able to make to the veſſel, was drowned. What ſhall I ſay of the gratitude and fidelity of horſes? Pliny gives us a relation of ſome that have had ſuch a lively concern for the loſs of their maſters, as to ſhed tears for them, and of others that have ſtarved themſelves to death for the ſame reaſon. Some there are again that have revenged their maſter's death upon thoſe that murdered them, by tearing them in pieces or by trampling them under their feet. Nor is the gratitude of dogs leſs ſurpriſing, of whom the ſame author relates ſuch ſtrange things as are almoſt incredible. Amongſt the reſt he tells us of one that, having fought for his maſter, who was murdered by highway men, as long as he was able, ſat by the dead body to keep off the birds and beaſts from devouring of it. He ſpeaks of another that would neither eat nor drink after he had ſeen his maſter, Lucius, dead. He relates another much more remarkable paſſage that happened at Rome in his time, which is this: A certain man that was condemned to die had a dog which he had kept very long, and which never left him all the time he was in priſon, no, nor after his execution; but, on the contrary, ſtaying always by him, made known his grief by his howling. If any body flung him a piece of bread, he would take it up and carry it immediately to his maſter, and put it in into his mouth. At laſt the body being thrown into the Tyber, the dog leaped in and got under it, to keep it from ſinking. Can there be any thing in the world more grateful than this was? Now if beaſts who have only a ſmall ſpark of natural inſtinct, whereby to acknowledge a good turn, are yet ſo ready to requite, ſerve and attend their benefactors, how can man, who has ſo much more light to know the good he receives, be ſo forgetful of him that beſtows ſo much upon him? How comes he to ſuffer himſelf to be outdone by beaſts, in courteſy, fidelity and gratitude? Eſpecially when the benefits which man receives from God, are ſo infinitely beyond thoſe which beaſts receive from men, when the benefactor is ſo excellent, his love ſo ſingular and his intention ſo ſincere, that he propoſes no intereſt to himſelf, but does all out of mere charity and bounty. This is indeed a matter of no ſmall wonder and aſtoniſhment, and evidently ſhews there are devils that blind our underſtandings, harden

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our wills and impair our memories, that we may not remember ſo liberal a benefactor.

8. Now if it be ſo great a crime to forget this Lord, what muſt it be to affront him, and to convert his favours into the inſtruments of our offences againſt him? Seneca ſays, that not to pay back the benefits we have received, is the firſt degree of ingratitude; the ſecond is to forget them; the third is to render evil for good; and this laſt is the higheſt degree. But what is all this to the affronting and abuſing of your benefactor with thoſe very kindneſſes he has ſhewn you? I doubt whether there is any man in the world, who has ever dealt with his fellow creatures, as we frequently deal with God. What man would be ſo inhumane as to go immediately and employ a conſiderable ſum of money he had received from his prince, in raiſing an army againſt him. And yet you, baſe and miſerable wretch! never ceaſe to make war upon God, with thoſe very bounties you have received from him. What can a man think of more abominable than this? Should a huſband make a preſent to his wife of a neck-lace of pearl, or a rich ſet of diamonds, to oblige her to honour and love him the more. What would you ſay of the perfidiouſneſs of this woman, if ſhe ſhould throw all away immediately upon her gallant, to tie him the more ſtrongly to her, and make herſelf more the miſtreſs of his affection. Every body would certainly look upon this as the baſeſt action any perſon could be guilty of; and yet the offence here is only between equals. How much more heinous then is this crime, when the affront is offered to God? And yet this it is thoſe perſons are guilty of, who waſte all their ſtrength, ſpend their eſtates and ruin their health in committing of ſinful actions. Their ſtrength makes them proud, their beauty makes them conceited, and their health unmindful of God. Their wealth enables them to devour the poor, to vie with the great ones, to pamper their fleſh, and to corrupt the virtue of ſome unthinking maid, making, her like Judas, ſell what Chriſt purchaſed with his blood, whilſt they buy it for money like the Jews: what ſhall I ſay of the abuſe of other graces? The ſea ſerves but to ſatisfy their gluttony, and the beauty of the creatures their luſt. The fruits and products of the earth ſerve to feed their avarice, and their wit and natural gifts go to the increaſing of their vanity. They are puffed up in proſperity, even to folly, and caſt down to diſpair in adverſity. They chuſe the darkneſs of the night to hide their thefts, and the light

light of the day for the laying of their ſnares, as we read in holy Job. In ſhort, whatſoever God has created for his own glory, they have devoted to ſatisfy their inordinate paſſions.

9. What ſhall I ſay of their eſſences and perfumes, of their ſtately furniture, their ſumptuous tables, the niceneſs and ſuperfluity of their diſhes, with their different ſorts of ſauces, and their ſeveral ways of cooking? Nay, ſenſuality and luxury are ſo much in faſhion, that men have made a trade of theſe ſcandalous exceſſes, and publiſhed books to inſtruct us how to ſin in this matter. They have corrupted all things by their miſuſing them, and inſtead of taking an occaſion from them to praiſe God, the end they were given them for, they have made uſe of them as the incentives to their debaucheries and vanities; thus perverting the lawful uſe of the creatures they have made thoſe things help and aſſiſt them in vice, which ought to have encouraged and excited them to virtue. There is nothing, in fine, which they have not ſacrificed to the gratifying of their ſenſes, and the pampering of their fleſh, whilſt they have quite neglected to relieve their neighbour, though God has ſo particularly recommended him to their care. They never complain that they are poor, but to thoſe that are ſo themſelves; nor do they ever ſo much as think of paying their debts, unleſs when any body comes to beg an alms of them: take them at any other time, and you ſhall neither find them poor, nor in debt.

10. Have a care this be not laid to your charge at the hour of your death. Do not ſuffer ſo heavy a burden as this, to be preſſing upon you at that time. Conſider that the greater the concern is, the more ſtrict account you muſt give of it. To have received much, and to have made but ſmall acknowledgment for it, is a kind of judgment laid upon you already. It is a great ſign of a man's reprobation, when he continues to abuſe thoſe favours God Almighty beſtows on him. Let us look upon it as the utmoſt diſgrace, that brute beaſts ſhould ſurpaſs us in this virtue; ſince they requite their benefactors with gratitude, whilſt we neglect to do it? If the Ninevites are to riſe up in judgment againſt the Jews, and condemn them for not entering into a ſtate of penance after our Saviour's preaching, let us take care that the ſame Lord have no reaſon, at the laſt day, to condemn us upon the examples of beaſts, for taking ſo little notice of our benefactors, when they have expreſſed ſo much love to theirs.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the fourth Motive that obliges us to the Purſuit of Virtue, which is the ineſtimable Benefit of our Redemption.

1. LET us come now to the great work of our redemption, a favour not to be comprehended by either men or angels. A myſtery ſo much above whatſoever I am able to ſay, and myſelf ſo unworthy at the ſame time to ſpeak any thing of it, that I neither know where to begin nor where to leave off, what to take nor what to leave. Were not man ſo ſtupid as to ſtand in need of theſe incentives, to ſtir him up to the love of virtue, it would be much better to adore this profound myſtery in ſilence than to eclipſe it by the darkneſs of our expreſſion. They tell us of a certain famous painter, who, having drawn a picture repreſenting the death of a king's daughter, and painted her friends and relations ſtanding about her with moſt ſorrowful countenances, and her mother more melancholy than any of the reſt; when he came to draw the father's face, he hid it under a ſhade, to ſignify that ſo much grief was not to be expreſſed by art. Now if all we are able to ſay fall ſhort of explaining the benefit of our creation, what eloquence will ſuffice deſervedly to extol that of our redemption? God created the whole univerſe by one ſingle act of his will, without ſpending the leaſt part of his treaſures, or weakening the ſtrength of his Almighty arm. But to the redeeming of it, there went no leſs than thirty-three years ſweat and toil, with the effuſion of his blood to the very laſt drop, and not one of his ſenſes or members was exempt from ſuffering its particular pain and anguiſh. It looks like a leſſening of ſuch ſublime myſteries, to attempt to explain them with mortal tongue. What ſhall I do then? ſhall I ſpeak, or ſhall I hold my peace? I am obliged not to be ſilent, and am unfit to ſpeak. How can I be ſilent of ſuch wondrous effects of God's mercy? And how ſhall I be able to diſcourſe of ſuch ineffable myſteries? To be ſilent looks like ingratitude, and to ſpeak of it ſeems a raſhneſs. Wherefore, I here proſtrate myſelf before thee, O my God, imploring thy Divine aſſiſtance and mercy to the end, that, whilſt my ignorance detracts from thy glory, inſtead of extolling and diſplaying it, thoſe who are capable of doing it, may praiſe and glorify thee in Heaven, that they may ſupply what

what I am deficient in, and beautify and adorn what a mortal man cannot but ſpoil by the meanneſs of his capacity.

2. After God had created man, and with his own hand ſeated him in a place of delights, inveſting him with honour and glory, that which ought to have engaged him the more deeply in his Creator's ſervice, emboldened him the more to rebel againſt him. Whereas the infinite favours he had received, ſhould have laid a ſtricter obligation on him to love that divine goodneſs that beſtowed them, he made uſe of them as inſtruments of his ingratitude. This was the cauſe of his being driven out of paradiſe, into the baniſhment of this world, and condemned to the pains of hell, that as he had been the devil's aſſociate in ſin, he might partake of his ſufferings and torments. When Giezi, Eliſha's ſervant, had received the preſent, which Naaman the leper made him, the Prophet ſaid to him: *Since thou haſt received Naaman's money, the leproſy therefore of Naaman ſhall cleave unto thee, and unto thy ſeed for ever*, 4 Kings v. 26, 27. God has pronounced a like ſentence againſt man, judging it requiſite that ſince he has coveted the riches of Lucifer, which are his guilt and his pride, he ſhould in like manner be defiled with Lucifer's leproſy, which is the puniſhment of his rebellion. Thus man, by imitating the devil's ſins, becomes like them, and ſhares with them in their puniſhment, as well as in their guilt.

3. Man having brought ſuch a diſgrace upon himſelf, this ſame God, whoſe mercy is as great as his majeſty, conſidered not the affront which was offered to his infinite goodneſs, ſo much as he did our miſery. He was more concerned for the unhappy condition we were reduced to, than angry for the offences we had committed againſt him; and therefore reſolved to ſuccour us by the means of his only Son, and to make him the Mediator of our reconciliation with himſelf. But what was this reconciliation? Who is able to expreſs this mercy? He ſettled ſuch a cloſe friendſhip betwixt God and man, as to find out a way to make God not only pardon man, receive him into his favour again, and make him one and the ſame thing with himſelf by love, but what is far beyond all expreſſion, he united him to himſelf, in ſuch a manner, that there are no created beings in nature ſo cloſe united as theſe two are now; becauſe they are not only one in love and in grace, but in perſon too. Who could ever have thought that ſuch a breach as this would have been ſo made up again? Who could have imagined that theſe two things, which

which nature and ſin had ſet at ſuch a diſtance, ſhould ever have been united together, not in the ſame houſe, at the ſame table, in the ſame union of grace and love, but in the ſame perſon? Are there any two things in the world more different from one another than God and a ſinner? And yet, are there any things more cloſely united than God and man are now? There is nothing, ſays St. Bernard, more high than God, and nothing lower than the clay man was made of. Yet has God, with ſo much humility, deſcended into this clay, and this clay with ſo much honour aſcended to God, that we may ſay the clay has done whatſoever God has done, and God has ſuffered all the clay has ſuffered.

4. When man, finding himſelf naked, and become an enemy to God, endeavoured to hide himſelf in the moſt concealed parts of the terreſtrial paradiſe, who would have made him believe a time would come when this baſe and vile ſubſtance ſhould be united to God in one and the ſame perſon? This alliance was ſo ſtrict and cloſe that it could not be ſeparated even by death, which broke the union between ſoul and body, but could never divide the divinity from the humanity, becauſe God never quitted what he had once taken on him for our ſake.

Thus our peace was concluded, this is the medicine we have received at the hands of our Saviour and Mediator. And though we are infinitely more indebted to God for ſo ſovereign a cure, than we are any wiſe able to expreſs, we are no leſs obliged to him for the manner of applying it than for the remedy itſelf. I am infinitely indebted to thee, O my God, for having redeemed me from hell, and reſtored me to thy favour; but I owe thee much more for the manner of reſtoring my liberty, than for the liberty itſelf. All thy works, O Lord, are to be admired in every part of them; and though man may ſeem to loſe himſelf in the contemplation of any one of thy wonders, the ſame diſappears as ſoon as he lifts up his eyes towards Heaven to reflect upon another. Nor is this any diſcredit to thy greatneſs, O Lord, but an argument of thy glory.

5. What courſe, O my God, haſt thou taken to heal me? Thou mighteſt have procured me my ſalvation an infinite number of ways, without putting thyſelf to any trouble or expence; but thy bounty was ſo great and ſurpriſing, that to give me a more manifeſt proof of thy goodneſs and mercy, thou haſt choſe to relieve my miſeries by thy own pains and ſufferings,

ſufferings, which were ſo vehement, that the very thoughts of them drew a bloody ſweat from thy veins, and thy undergoing of them rent the very rocks with ſorrow. Let the Heavens and the Angels praiſe thee, O my God for ever; and let them never ceaſe to publiſh thy wondrous works! What need had'ſt thou of our goods, or what damage were our miſeries to thee? *If thou ſhould'ſt ſin*, ſays Elihu to Job, *what hurt wilt thou do to God? And if thy tranſgreſſions ſhould be multiplied, what wilt thou do againſt him? On the contrary, if thou ſhalt do that which is juſt, what wilt thou give him, or what can he receive from thy hand?* Job xxxv. 6, 7. This great God who is ſo powerful, and ſo far above the reach of any misfortune; He, whoſe riches, whoſe power and whoſe wiſdom can neither be increaſed nor leſſened; he, who was neither greater nor leſs after he had created the world, than he was before; he, who can receive no more glory from all the praiſes men and angels are able to give him, than what he has always had from all eternity; he, who would be no leſs glorious, though each particular mouth were to be employed in curſing and blaſpheming him: this Lord, I ſay, whoſe majeſty is ſo great and infinite, notwithſtanding our infidelities and treacheries have been ſuch as deſerve his eternal anger and hatred, has vouchſafed, even when he had no need at all of us, and upon no other motive but that of his exceſſive love to us, to bow down the heavens of his greatneſs and to deſcend into this place of baniſhment, to cloath himſelf with our fleſh, to undertake the payment of our debts, and that he might diſcharge us to undergo the moſt dreadful torments that ever were, or that ever ſhall be undergone! It was for my ſake, O my God, that thou haſt been born in a ſtable, laid in a manger, circumciſed the eighth day, and forced to fly into Egypt; it was for the love of me that thou haſt been ſo affronted and injured; it was for me that thou haſt faſted, watched, and wandered from place to place; that thou haſt ſweated, wept and ſubjected thyſelf to all thoſe miſeries which my ſins have deſerved, notwithſtanding that thou wert ſo far from being the offender, as to be all this while the party offended; it was for me that thou wert apprehended, forſaken, ſold, denied, and brought before ſeveral courts and judges; it was for my ſake that thou wert accuſed before them, that thou wert affronted, buffeted, ſpit upon, whipt, blaſphemed, put to death and buried. Thou haſt, in fine, vouchſafed for the healing of my wounds to die upon a croſs, in the ſight of thy moſt holy mother in ſo great poverty, as not

not to have one drop of water at the hour of thy death, and in ſo ſtupendous a manner forſaken by all, that thy heavenly Father himſelf ſeemed to neglect thee at that time. Can any thing enter into the heart of man more lamentable than this, to ſee a God of moſt infinite majeſty come down upon earth to end his life upon a croſs, like a notorious malefactor.

6. If any man, though of ever ſo mean a condition, were to be executed for ſome public crime he had committed, there is no body could, without ſome kind of concern, eſpecially if he had known him before, conſider the deplorable ſtate his miſery had reduced him to, and the unhappy end he was going to make. Now, if it be ſurpriſing to ſee a man of but an ordinary condition brought to ſuch diſgrace, how ought we to be aſtoniſhed, when we ſee the Lord of all created things in no better circumſtances? What a ſubject of wonder ſhould it be, to ſee a God dealt with like a malefactor? and if it be true, that the better quality a perſon is of, the more we are ſurpriſed at his diſgrace and fall, what ſurpriſe muſt have ſeized you? O, you bleſſed angels, who had ſo full a knowledge of the greatneſs of this Lord, what did you think when you ſaw him hanging upon a croſs? God commanded Moſes to put two cherubims at the ſides of the ark, with their faces turned towards the mercy-ſeat, and looking upon one another with admiration, Exod. xxv. 18. and for what other end was all this, but to give us to underſtand with what a holy aſtoniſhment thoſe ſupreme ſpirits muſt be ſeized, when they conſider the effect of ſo great a charity, and behold this great God, who created heaven and earth, nailed to the holy croſs, to atone for our crimes? Nature herſelf is amazed, and every creature is aſtoniſhed. The principalities and powers of Heaven are raviſhed with this ineſtimable goodneſs which they behold in God. Is there any body, after all this, that is not ſwallowed up in the abyſs of ſuch wonders? Who is there that is not drowned in the ocean of ſuch infinite mercies? Who is there that can contain his admiration, ſo as not to cry out with Moſes, when God ſhewed him the figure of the myſtery upon the mount, *O Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in mercy and truth!* Exod. xxxiv. 6. He was unable to do any thing elſe, but publiſh aloud the infinite goodneſs God had given him a ſight of? Who would not, like Elias, 3 Kings xix. 13. hide his eyes if he ſaw his God paſſing by, not in the brightneſs of his majeſty, but under the veil

veil of his littleneſs; not overturning the mountains, or ſpliting the rocks in pieces by his omnipotence, but delivered up into the hands of the wicked, and making the very rocks grow ſoft and burſt aſunder with compaſſion? Who is there that will not ſhut the eyes of his underſtanding and open the boſom of his will, that at the ſight of ſo boundleſs a love it may be inflamed with gratitude, and return all the love it is able to give without ſetting any limits or meaſure to its paſſion? O height of charity! O depth of humility! O greatneſs of mercy! O abyſs of incomprehenſible goodneſs!

7. If it be true, O Lord, that I am thus indebted to thee for having redeeming me, how great muſt the obligation be for thy having redeemed me in ſuch a manner? For to redeem me thou haſt ſuffered ſuch torments and ſuch diſgrace as are above the reach of our imagination. Thou haſt made thyſelf the ſcorn of men and the contempt of the world for the love of me. To procure me honour thou haſt diſhonoured thyſelf, and haſt ſuffered thyſelf to be accuſed that I might be acquitted. Thou haſt ſhed thy blood to wath away the ſtains of my guilt. Thou haſt died to raiſe me to life, and by thy tears haſt delivered me from everlaſting weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. How truly doſt thou deſerve the name of a kind Father, ſince thou haſt had ſo tender a love for thy children? How juſtly art thou to be called a good Shepherd, who haſt given thyſelf for the nouriſhment of thy flock? How truly faithful a guardian art thou, ſince thou haſt ſo freely laid down thy life for thoſe whom thou haſt taken into thy care? What preſent ſhall I make thee anſwerable to this preſent? With what tears ſhall I return theſe tears? With what life ſhall I repay this life? What proportion is there betwixt the life of a man and the life of his God, betwixt the tears of a creature and thoſe of his Creator?

8. But if, O man, thou ſhouldſt perhaps imagine that his ſufferings for every body elſe as well as for thee, has leſſened thy obligation, thou deceiveſt thyſelf. For though he ſuffered for all mankind in general, it was in ſuch a manner that he ſuffered for each particular perſon. For his infinite wiſdom gave him as clear and as diſtinct a repreſentation of all thoſe for whom he underwent thoſe torments, as if there had been but one ſingle perſon, and his immenſe charity, which made him take in all together, has done no leſs for each one in particular. So that he has ſhed his blood for every ſingle man, as much as for all mankind together; and ſo great has been his

his mercy, that had there been but one ſinner in the whole world, he would have ſuffered as much for him alone as he has done now for all the world. Conſider therefore how infinitely thou art obliged to this Lord, who has done ſo much for thee, and who would have done a great deal more if there had been any need of it, for procuring thy happineſs.

SECTION I.

We may gather from what has been hitherto ſaid, how grievous a Thing it is to offend God.

9. I appeal now to all creatures, whether man can poſſibly think of any greater benefit, any more generous favour, or any obligation more binding than this is. Tell me, O all ye quires of angels, whether God has ever done ſo much for you? Can any man then, after all this, refuſe to give himſelf up intirely to the ſervice of God? I am indebted to thee, O Lord, ſays St. Anſelm, for all that I am, upon three ſeveral accounts. Becauſe thou haſt created me, I owe thee all that is in me, I owe thee the ſame debt and with more juſtice, becauſe thou haſt redeemed me. And becauſe thou haſt promiſed to reward me with the enjoyment of thyſelf, I cannot but acknowledge I am wholly thine. Why then do not I give myſelf once at leaſt to him, to whom I am ſo juſtly due? O inſupportable ingratitude! O invincible hardneſs of man's heart, which is not to be ſoftened by ſo many favours! There is nothing in the world ſo hard, but it may by ſome means or other be made much ſofter. Fire melts metals, iron grows flexible in the forge, the blood of certain animals will ſoften even the diamond itſelf. But O, more than ſtony heart, what iron, what diamond is ſo hard as thou art, if neither the flames of hell, nor the care of ſo charitable a father, nor the blood of the unſpotted lamb which has been ſhed for thee, can make thee ſoft and flexible? Since thou, O Lord, haſt ſhewed ſo much goodneſs, ſo much mercy, and ſo much kindneſs to man, is it to be borne with that any one ſhould not love, that any one ſhould forget this benefit, and that any one ſhould ſtill offend thee? What can that man love, that is not in love with thee? What favours can work upon him, that is not to be wrought upon by thine? How can I refuſe to ſerve him who has had ſuch a love for me, who has ſought after me with ſo much ſolicitude, and who has done ſo much for the redeeming of me? *I*, ſays our Saviour, *if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto me*, St. John i. 32. With what force, O Lord,

with what chains? with the force of my love, with the chains of my mercies. *I will draw them*, ſays the Lord, *with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love*, Hoſea xi. 4. Who is there that will not be drawn with theſe cords? Who will not ſuffer himſelf to be bound with theſe chains? or who will not be won by theſe mercies?

10. Now, if it be ſo heinous a crime not to love this great God, what muſt it be to offend him and to break his commandments? How can you dare to employ your hands in injuring thoſe hands which have been ſo liberal to you, as to ſuffer themſelves to be nailed to a croſs for your ſake? When the holy Patriarch Joſeph, was ſolicited by his lewd miſtreſs to defile his maſter Potiphar's bed, the chaſte and grateful young man, by no means conſenting to ſo foul an action, made this reply: *Behold, my maſter hath committed all that he has into my hands, and knows not what he has in his houſe, nor is there any thing that is not in my power, or which he has not delivered to me, except you who are his wife: How then can I do this wickedneſs and ſin againſt my God?* Gen. xxiii. 8, 9. As if he had ſaid, ſince my maſter has been ſo kind and generous to me, ſince he has put all that he is worth into my hands, and has done me ſuch an honour as to intruſt me with his whole eſtate, how ſhall I, who am bound by ſo many obligations, dare to affront ſo good a maſter. We are to obſerve here, that Joſeph did not ſay, *I ought not*, or *it is not juſt that I ſhould offend him*, but *how can I do this wickedneſs?* to ſignify that extraordinary favours ought to deprive us not only of the will, but in ſome meaſure of the very power of offending our benefactor. If therefore ſo great an acknowledgment was due to ſuch benefits as theſe, what is it thoſe favours we have received from God do not deſerve? That maſter who was but a mortal man had intruſted him with the management of his eſtate. God has delivered into your hands almoſt all he has; conſider how much the riches of God exceed thoſe of Potiphar, for ſo much more have you received than he did. And to make this out, what is it God poſſeſſes which he has not intruſted you with? Pſ. viii. The ſky, the earth, the ſun, the moon, the ſtars, the rivers, the birds, the fiſhes, the trees, the beaſts, whatſoever, in ſhort, is under the heavens is in your power, and not only what is under Heaven, but even what is in Heaven itſelf, that is, the glory, the riches, and the happineſs that is to be found there. *All things are yours*, ſays the Apoſtle, *whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

for

for they all contribute to your ſalvation. Nor is that which is in Heaven all we have, the very Lord of Heaven himſelf is ours too. He has given himſelf to us a thouſand ways, as our father, our tutor, our Saviour, our maſter, our phyſician, our price, our example, our food, our remedy, and our reward. To conclude, the father has given us his Son, the Son has made us worthy of the Holy Ghoſt, and it is by the virtue of the Holy Ghoſt that we deſerve the Father and the Son, who are the very ſources and fountains from whence all ſorts of riches flow.

11. If it be true that God has given you the poſſeſſion of all, how can you find in your heart to offend ſo bountiful and ſo generous a benefactor? If it be a crime not to requite ſuch great favours, what muſt it be to deſpiſe and offend him that beſtows them? If young Joſeph thought himſelf unable to do an injury to his maſter, becauſe he had committed the care of his houſe to him, with what face can you affront him who has delivered all Heaven and earth, nay himſelf too into your hands? O miſerable and unhappy man! if you are not ſenſible of this evil, you are more ungrateful than the brutes are, more ſavage than the moſt ſavage tigers, and more ſenſeleſs than any ſenſeleſs thing in nature. For what lion or tiger is ſo enraged, as to fly at him that has done him a kindneſs? St. Ambroſe tells us of a dog, that ſeeing his maſter killed by one of his enemies, continued all night by the body barking and howling. The next day, amongſt a great many people that crowded to ſee the corps, the dog ſpied out the perſon that had committed the murder, and immediately flew upon him, and ſo by his barking and biting diſcovered the malefactor, who otherwiſe might have probably eſcaped. If a dog ſhewed ſo much love and fidelity to his maſter for a morſel of bread, how can you be ſo ungrateful as to let a dog outdo you in good nature and gratitude? And if this creature was in ſuch a rage againſt the man that had murdered his maſter, how can you forbear being incenſed againſt thoſe who have put yours to death? And who do you think are they, but your own ſins? It was they that apprehended and bound him, that ſcourged and crucified him. Your ſins, I ſay, were the cauſe of all this. For his executioners could never have had ſo much power, if your ſins had not given it them. Why then do not you riſe up in arms againſt theſe barbarous murderers, who have taken away your Lord and Saviour's life? How can you behold him lying dead before you, and for your ſake, without encreaſing your love for him and your averſion to

ſin, which has been the occaſion of his death? eſpecially, knowing that whatſoever he either ſaid, did, or ſuffered in this world, was for no other end, but to excite in our hearts a horror and deteſtation of ſin. He died to make ſin die, and ſuffered his hands and feet to be nailed, that he might bind up ſin in chains, and bring it under ſubjection. Why then will you let all your Saviour's toils, ſweat and pains be loſt to you? Since he has with his blood delivered you from your fetters, why will you ſtill remain a ſlave? How can you forbear trembling at the very name of ſin, when God has done ſuch extraordinary things to ruin and deſtroy it? What could God have done more, in order to bring men off from ſin, than to place himſelf upon a croſs betwixt it and them? If a man were to ſee Heaven and hell open before him, would he then dare to offend God? And yet it is, without doubt, a thing much ſtranger and more ſurpriſing to ſee a God nailed to an infamous croſs. If therefore ſo frightful a ſpectacle as this cannot work upon man, there is nothing in nature will be able to move him.

CHAP. V.

Of the fifth Motive that obliges us to Virtue, which is the Benefit of our Juſtification.

1. BUT what would the benefit of our redemption avail, were it not followed by that of juſtification, by which this extraordinary favour is applied to us? For, as phyſic, though ever ſo well prepared, is wholly uſeleſs, if not applied to the diſtemper, ſo this heavenly medicine would work no cure upon us, unleſs applied by means of this benefit we now treat of. This application is peculiarly the work of the Holy Ghoſt, to whom the ſanctification of man is attributed. He it is who prevents the ſinner with his mercy, who having thus prevented calls him, who juſtifies him when called, who conducts him when juſtified in the paths of juſtice, and thus raiſes him to perfection by the gift of perſeverance, to crown him in the end with everlaſting glory. Theſe are the different degrees of grace contained under the ineſtimable favours of juſtification

SECTION

SECTION I.

2. The firſt of all theſe graces is that of our vocation.—When man by the force of this Divine ſpirit, having broken all the bands and fetters of his ſins, is freed from the tyrannical ſlavery of the devil, and raiſed from death to life, when of a ſinner, he becomes a ſaint and a child of God, from a child of wrath, which is not to be done without the ſpecial help of the Divine grace, as our Saviour teſtified to us by theſe words: *No man can come to me, except my Father which has ſent me draw him.* John vi. 44. To ſignify to us, that neither free-will, nor all the advantages of human nature, are ſufficient of themſelves to lift a man out of the depth of ſin, and raiſe him to the ſtate of grace, unleſs God Almighty lend him a helping-hand. And St. Thomas, explaining theſe very words, ſays, That as the ſtone naturally tends downwards, and cannot raiſe itſelf up again without ſome exterior aſſiſtance, ſo man, according to the bent of his nature, depraved by the corruption of ſin, is always ſinking downward in the deſire of earthly things; ſo that God muſt of neceſſity lend a hand to lift him up to a ſupernatural love and deſire of heavenly delights, or he will never be able to riſe. This ſentence very well deſerves both our conſideration and tears, for by it man comes to know himſelf, grows ſenſible of the corruption of his nature, and of the neceſſity he perpetually lies under of begging God Almighty's aſſiſtance.

3. But to come to the matter in hand, it is impoſſible for man to return from ſin to grace, unleſs the Almighty hand of God raiſe him up. But this is a favour of ſuch value, that there is no expreſſing how many graces are contained in it. For there being nothing more certain, than that ſin is by this means rooted out of the ſoul, and that it is ſin which is the cauſe of all its miſeries, how great a good muſt this conſequently be, which expels and baniſhes ſo many evils? But for as much as the conſideration of this benefit is a powerful motive to make us grateful for it, and excite us to the purſuit of virtue, I will explain here in ſhort the vaſt riches this benefit brings along with it.

4. Firſt then, it is by this that man is reconciled to God and reſtored to his favour; for the greateſt miſery ſin cauſes in our ſouls, is the rendering them odious to God, who, as he is goodneſs itſelf, bears ſuch a hatred to ſin as is proportioned to his goodneſs. For this reaſon, the royal Prophet ſays, *Thou, O Lord, hateſt all them that work iniquity, thou ſhalt deſtroy*

ſtroy all them that tell lies; the Lord will abhor both the bloodthirſty and the deceitful man, Pſ. v. 7, 8. It is this which in effect is the greateſt of all evils, and the ſource from whence all others flow; as the love of God on the other ſide is the greateſt of all goods, and the very fountain of all the reſt. This therefore is the evil we are freed from by virtue of our juſtification, ſince by it we are reſtored to God's favour, and though we were his enemies before, this reconciles us to his love again, and that not in any mean degree, but in the higheſt that may be, which is that of a father for his ſon. This is it the beloved Evangeliſt St. John ſo much extols, when he ſays, *Behold what manner of love the Father has beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God, and be ſo too*, St. John iii. 1. He does not think it enough to ſay, that we are called the children of God; he adds farther, that we are really ſo to the end, that human diſtruſt which carries ſo much weakneſs and imperfection along with it, ſhould have a clearer and more diſtinct view of the liberality of God's grace, and perceive that he has truly and really enabled man by making him his Son, and not given him the title only. If, as we have ſaid, it is ſo miſerable a thing to be hated by God, what a happineſs muſt it be to be loved by him? Philoſophers tell us, that the worſe any thing is, the better and more excellent its contrary muſt be. Whence we are to conclude that thing muſt be ſupremely good, whoſe oppoſite is ſupremely evil, ſuch as man is when he is become the object of God's hatred. If men uſe ſo much caution in this world not to loſe the love of their maſters, fathers, princes, ſuperiors or kings, how ſolicitous ſhould we be to keep in favour with this powerful King, this heavenly Prince, this ſovereign Lord and Father, in compariſon of whom all earthly power and authority is a mere nothing? This favour is the greater, by how much it is more freely beſtowed, for as man could do nothing before he was created, to deſerve his being, becauſe at that time he was not; ſo neither could he, after having once fallen into ſin, do any thing at all that might deſerve the gift of juſtification; not becauſe he was not, but becauſe he was wicked and odious in the ſight of God.

5. Another benefit beſide this is, that juſtification takes off the ſentence of everlaſting torments, which man's ſins had condemned him to. For, whereas ſin makes a man the object of God's hatred, and it is impoſſible that any one ſhould be hated by him, and not at the ſame time be in the greateſt miſery imaginable, it follows, that the wicked, having caſt God

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Almighty off from them, and ungratefully deſpiſed him, deſerve very juſtly to be caſt away by God, and to be deſpiſed and neglected by him. They deſerve to be baniſhed for ever from his preſence, never to enjoy his company, never to enter into his moſt beautiful and glorious palace. And becauſe, in ſeparating themſelves from him, they have had an irregular love for the creatures, it is but juſtice they ſhould be condemned for the ſame to eternal pains and torments, which are ſo rigorous, that if we compare all that men ſuffer in this life to them, they will look more like painted than real torments. Let us add to theſe miſeries, the never dying worm, which will continually gnaw the very bowels and tear the conſciences of the wicked; add alſo the company which theſe unhappy ſouls muſt always keep, which ſhall be no pleaſanter than that of all the damned. What ſhall I ſay of their horrible and melancholy habitation, full of darkneſs and confuſion, where there never ſhall be any order, joy, reſt or peace; never any comfort, ſatisfaction or hope? Where there ſhall be nothing but eternal weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, eternal rage and blaſphemies. God delivers thoſe whom he juſtifies from all theſe miſeries, and having reſtored them to his grace and favour, frees them entirely from his wrath and vengeance.

6. There is another advantage yet more ſpiritual than the former, which is the reforming and renewing of the inward man, all deformed and diſfigured by ſin. Becauſe ſin, in the firſt place, deprives the ſoul, not only of God, but of all its ſupernatural force, and of all thoſe gifts and treaſures of the Holy Ghoſt with which it was enriched and adorned. So that being once robbed of the riches of grace, it is immediately maimed and wounded in all its natural powers and faculties; becauſe man being a rational creature, and ſin being an action againſt reaſon, as it is very natural for one contrary to deſtroy another, it follows of courſe that the greater and more numerous our ſins are, the greater muſt be the ruin the faculties of the ſoul lie open to, not in themſelves, but in the natural inclination they have to do good. Thus ſin makes the ſoul miſerable, weak, ſlothful, inconſtant in the doing of what is good, and bent upon all kind of evil, unable to reſiſt temptations, and ſoon tired with walking in the way of God's commandments. It alſo deprives the ſoul of the true liberty, and of that ſovereignty of the ſpirit, and makes it a meer ſlave to the world, the fleſh, the devil, and its own inordinate appetites; bringing it under a harder and more unhappy ſervitude than that of the Iſraelites in Egypt or Babylon. Nor are

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theſe all the miſeries which ſin reduces the ſoul to; it oppreſſes it beſides in ſuch manner, and ſo deſtroys all its ſpiritual motions and ſenſes, that it can neither hear God ſpeaking to it, nor perceive thoſe dreadful calamities which it is threatened with; it is quite ſenſeleſs to that ſweet ſmell which comes from the virtues and examples of the ſaints; it cannot taſte how ſweet the Lord is, nor feel the ſtrokes of God's hand, any more than thoſe graces which he pours into it, to excite it to the love of him. Beſides all theſe ills, it takes away the peace and joy of conſcience, and ſo by degrees leſſens and cools the fervour of the ſpirit, till it leaves poor man in ſuch a miſerable condition, that he is foul, deformed and abominable in the ſight of God and all his ſaints.

7. The grace of juſtification delivers us from all theſe miſeries. For God, who is an infinite abyſs of mercy, thinks it not enough to pardon our ſins and receive us into his favour, unleſs he free our ſouls from all thoſe diſorders which ſin had raiſed in it, by reforming and renewing our inward man. So that he heals our wounds, he cleanſes us from our filth, he looſens our chains, he eaſes us of the burden of our evil deſires, he frees us from the ſlavery and captivity of the devil, he moderates the heat of our paſſions, he reſtores us to a true liberty, he beautifies the ſoul anew, he ſettles peace and joy in our conſciences again, he enlivens our inward motions, he makes us forward to do what is good and backward to do that which is not, he ſtrengthens us againſt temptations, and after all theſe benefits, he enriches us with a treaſure of good works; in fine, he repairs our inward man with all its faculties after ſuch a manner, that the Apoſtle does not ſtick at calling thoſe who are thus juſtified, *New men and new creatures*, 2 Cor. iv. 16. So great is the grace of this renovation, that when we receive it by baptiſm, it is called a regeneration, Galat. vi. 15. when by penance, a reſurrection, not only becauſe the ſoul, by virtue of it is raiſed from the death of ſin to the life of grace, but becauſe it holds ſome proportion with the glory of the general reſurrection at the laſt day. This is ſo certainly true, that no tongue is able to declare the beauty of a juſtified ſoul, but only that Divine ſpirit which beautifies and makes it his temple and dwelling-place; ſo that if we ſhould compare all the riches of the earth, all the honours of the world, all the benefits of nature, and all the virtues we are able to acquire, with the beauty and riches of ſuch a ſoul, they would all appear baſe and deformed before it. Becauſe the life of grace has the ſame advantages over that of nature, the beauty of

of the ſoul over that of the body, inward riches over the outward, and ſpiritual ſtrength over the corporal, as heaven has over earth, a ſpirit over a body, or eternity over time. For all theſe things are tranſitory, limited, and only beautiful to the eyes of the body; nor have they need of any more than of a general aſſiſtance and ſupport from God, whilſt the others ſtand in need of a peculiar and ſupernatural help, and cannot be called temporal, becauſe they lead us to eternity; nor can we ſay they are altogether finite, becauſe they make us worthy to partake of the infinity of God, who has ſuch an eſteem and love for them, that he is even enamoured with their beauty. And though God could do all theſe things only by his will, yet he was not ſo ſatisfied, but would adorn the ſoul with infuſed virtues and the ſeven gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; by means whereof not only the eſſence, but all the faculties of the ſoul are adorned and beautified with theſe heavenly graces.

8. To all theſe extraordinary benefits, that infinite goodneſs and boundleſs liberality has added another, which is the preſence of the Holy Ghoſt and of all the Bleſſed Trinity, which deſcends into the ſoul of him that is juſtified, to inſtruct him what uſe to make of all theſe riches; like a good father, who not only leaves his eſtate to his ſon, but provides him a guardian to look after and manage it for him; ſo that as the ſoul of one that is in ſin is a den for vipers, dragons and ſerpents; that is to ſay, a place where all ſorts of wicked ſpirits dwell, according to our Saviour, in St. Matthew, ch. xii. ſo the ſoul of a juſtified man becomes the habitation of the Holy Ghoſt and of all the Bleſſed Trinity, which, having expelled all theſe helliſh monſters and wild beaſts, make it their temple and place of abode, as our Saviour has expreſly ſignified by theſe words: *If a man love me, he will obſerve my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him*, St. John xiv. 23. From which words the holy fathers and the ſchool-men conclude, that the Holy Ghoſt dwells in a particular manner in the ſoul of a juſtified man, diſtinguiſhing the Holy Ghoſt and his gifts; and declaring that ſuch perſons partake, not only of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, but they of the Holy Ghoſt himſelf; who, entering into every ſoul thus diſpoſed, makes it his temple and dwelling place; and to this end he himſelf cleanſes, ſanctifies and adorns it with his gifts, that it may be a place worthy to entertain ſuch a gueſt.

9. Add to all theſe benefits one more, which is, that all thoſe who are juſtified become living members of Jeſus Chriſt,

Chriſt, whereas they were dead before and incapable, whilſt they remained in that condition, of receiving the influence of his grace, whence many other ſingular privileges and excellencies flow to it. For this is the reaſon why the Son of God loves and cheriſhes theſe perſons as his own members, and as their head is continually communicating force and vigour to them. And laſtly, the eternal Father beholds them with eyes of affection, becauſe he looks upon them as living members of his only Son, united to and incorporated with him by the participation of the Holy Ghoſt. And therefore their actions are pleaſing to him and meritorious to themſelves, in as much as they are actions of the living members of his only Son Chriſt Jeſus, who produces all that is good in them. This is alſo the reaſon why thoſe perſons who are thus juſtifi-ed, whenſoever they beg any favour of Almighty God, addreſs themſelves to him with a perfect confidence; becauſe they ſuppoſe that what they aſk is not ſo much for themſelves as for the Son of God, who is honoured in them and with them: For ſince the members can receive no benefit, but the head muſt partake of it, Chriſt being their head, they conceive that when they aſk for themſelves they aſk for him. And if what the Apoſtle ſays be true, that they who ſin againſt the members of Jeſus Chriſt, ſin againſt Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and that he looks upon any injury offered to one of his members, upon his account, as done to him, as he ſaid to the Apoſtle himſelf, where he perſecuted the church; what wonder is it that the honour done to theſe members ſhould be done to him? This being ſo, what confidence will not the juſt man bring with him to his prayers, when he conſiders that in begging for himſelf, he, in ſome meaſure, begs of the Heavenly Father for his beloved Son? For when a favour is granted at the requeſt of another, it may, doubtleſs, rather be ſaid to be beſtowed on him that begs, than on him that receives it; as we ſee that he who ſerves the poor for the love of God, ſerves God more than he does the poor.

10. There remains another benefit to which the reſt tend and are directed, it is the right and title, thoſe that are juſtified, have to eternal life. For God, who is no leſs merciful than he is juſt, as he on the one ſide condemns impenitent ſinners to everlaſting torments, ſo, on the other ſide, he rewards them who are truly penitent with everlaſting happineſs. And though he could forgive men their ſins, and reſtore them to his friendſhip and favour, without raiſing them ſo high as to partake of his glory, yet he would not do ſo, but out of the exceſs of his mercy juſtified thoſe whom he had pardoned,

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adopted thoſe whom he had juſtified, and made them his heirs, giving them a ſhare in his riches and inheritance with his only Son. Hence proceeds that lively hope which comforts the juſt in all their tribulations, becauſe they are aſſured beforehand of this ineſtimable treaſure. For though they ſee themſelves ſurrounded with all the troubles, infirmities and miſeries of this life, they know very well that all the evils they can poſſibly ſuffer here are nothing at all, in compariſon of the glory which is prepared for them hereafter; nay, on the contrary, they aſſure themſelves, that *our affliction which at preſent is light, and but for a moment, worketh in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

11. Theſe are the advantages comprehended under that ineſtimable benefit of juſtification, which St. Auguſtine, with a great deal of reaſon, prefers before the creation of the whole world, becauſe God created all the world with one ſingle word; but the juſtifing of man after his fall was at the expence of his blood, and of thoſe other moſt grievous pains and torments he endured. Now, if we are ſo ſtrictly obliged to God Almighty's goodneſs for having created us, how much more do we owe his mercy, for having juſtified us, a favour we ſtand ſo much the more indebted for, as it coſt him more than the other?

12. And though no man can certainly tell whether he be juſtified or not, yet may he give a probable gueſs, eſpecially by the change of his life; as for example, when one that before never ſcrupled at committing a thouſand mortal ſins, would not now commit one, though it were to gain the world. Let him that perceives he is in ſuch a happy condition, conſider what an obligation lies upon him to ſerve his Lord, for having thus ſanctified him, and at the ſame time delivered him from all thoſe miſeries, and heaped all thoſe favours upon him which we ſpoke of. But if he happen to be in the ſtate of ſin, I know nothing that can more efficaciouſly excite him to a deſire of being freed from it, than the conſideration of thoſe misfortunes which ſin draws after it, and of thoſe treaſures of bleſſings which go along with the incomparable benefit of juſtification.

SECTION II.

Of ſome other Effects that are wrought by the Holy Ghoſt in the Soul of a juſtified Man, and of the Sacrament of the Euchariſt.

13. Notwithſtanding thoſe effects, we have ſaid, are produced by the Holy Ghoſt in the ſoul of one that is ſanctified

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are very great, yet they do not end there. This Divine Spirit thinks it not enough to put us into the way of juſtice, but, after having led us in, ſtill helps us forward, till, all the ſtorms of this world being weathered, he brings us into the haven of our ſalvation; ſo that when he has entered into a ſoul by the grace of juſtification, he does not remain idle there; he not only honours ſuch a ſoul with his preſence, but alſo ſanctifies it with his virtue, doing in it and with it whatſoever is neceſſary for the obtaining of its ſalvation. He behaves himſelf there like a head of a family in his houſe, looking after and directing like a maſter in his ſchool teaching, like a gardener in his garden cultivating, and like a king in his kingdom ruling and governing it; he further performs in the ſoul what the ſun does in the world; that is, he gives light to it; and, like the ſoul in the body, animates and enlivens it, though he does not act as the former does upon its matter, but as the head of a family in his houſe. Can man deſire any greater happineſs in this world than to have ſuch a gueſt, ſuch a guardian, ſuch a companion, ſuch a governor, ſuch a tutor, and ſuch an aſſiſtant within himſelf; for he being all things, exerciſes all capacities in the ſoul, with which he takes up his habitation: thus we ſee that, like fire, he enlightens the underſtanding, inflames the will, and raiſes us from earth to Heaven. It is he who, like a dove, makes us ſimple, peaceable, gentle, and kind to one another: he it is who, like a cloud, defends us againſt the burning luſts of the fleſh, who moderates the heat of our paſſions, and, in fine, like a violent wind, forces and bends down our wills towards that which is good, and carries them away from all ſuch affections as may lead them to evil. Hence it is, that thoſe who are juſtified conceive ſuch a horror of the vices they had ſo great a love for before their converſion, and ſo great an eſteem for the virtues they ſo much deteſted before. This David very lively repreſents to us, ſpeaking of himſelf in one of his Pſalms, where he ſays, *I hated and abhorred iniquity*; Pſ. cxviii. 163. and in another place of the ſame Pſalm, *I have rejoiced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as much as in all riches.* ver. 14. Who was it but the Holy Ghoſt that occaſioned this alteration? for he, like a loving mother, put wormwood upon the breaſts of this world, and moſt delicious honey into the commandments of God.

This plainly ſhews, that whatſoever good we do, what progreſs ſoever we make, we are entirely obliged to the Holy Ghoſt for the ſame. So that if we are converted from ſin,

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it is by his grace; if we embrace virtue, it is he that brings us to it; if we perſevere in it, it is by his aſſiſtance; if, in ſhort, we one day receive the reward he has promiſed, it is he himſelf that gives it us: for which reaſon St. Auguſtine ſays very well, *God rewards his own benefits when he rewards our ſervices.* So that one favour purchaſes us another, and one mercy is only a ſtep to the obtaining of another. The holy Patriarch Joſeph, Gen. xlii. 25. thought it not enough to give his brothers the corn they went to buy in Egypt, but ordered his ſervants to put the money they brought to pay for it into the mouth of the very ſack. God in ſome meaſure does the ſame with his elect, for he gives them not only eternal life, but grace and a good life to purchaſe it with. Whereupon Euſebius Emiſſenus ſays excellently well, "that he who is adored to the end, that he may ſhew mercy, has ſhewed mercy already, when he gave us grace to adore him."

Let every man therefore conſider how he has ſpent his life, and reflect upon all thoſe favours God has beſtowed on him, and on all thoſe crimes as frauds, adulteries, thefts and ſacrileges, which he has preſerved him from falling into, and by this means he will ſee upon how many accounts he ſtands indebted to him; becauſe, according to St. Auguſtine, it is no leſs mercy to preſerve us from falling into ſin, than to pardon it when committed, but much greater; and therefore the ſame ſaint, writing to a certain virgin, ſays, "Man is to make account that God has pardoned him all ſorts of ſin, in as much as he has given him grace not to commit them." Lib. 2. Conf. c. 7. Let not therefore your love be little, as if he had pardoned you but a little, rather endeavour to love much, becauſe you have received much. For if a man love's a creditor that forgives a great debt, how much more reaſon has he to love a benefactor that beſtows much on him to poſſeſs. For he who has lived chaſtely all his lifetime, has therefore continued ſo, becauſe he has God to direct and guide him; he who, of an impure perſon, becomes pure, has had God to correct him; and he who continues impure to the end, is juſtly forſaken by God Almighty. This being a matter beyond all doubt, it only remains that we ſay, with the Prophet, *Let my mouth be filled with praiſe, that I may ſing thy glory and honour all the day.* Pſ. lxx. 8. Upon which words St. Auguſtine ſays, "What means all the day? Nothing elſe, but that I will praiſe thee for ever, and without ceaſing in my proſperity, becauſe thou comforteſt me; in my adverſity, becauſe

cauſe thou chaſtiſeſt me; before I was made, becauſe thou haſt made me; ſince I have had my being, becauſe it is from thee that I have received it; when I ſinned, becauſe thou forgaveſt; when I returned to thee, becauſe thou receivedſt me; and when I perſevered to the end, becauſe thou rewardeſt me. For this reaſon my mouth ſhall be filled with thy praiſe, O Lord, and I will ſing thy glory all the day."

14. It would be proper here to ſpeak of the benefit of the ſacraments, which are the inſtruments of our juſtification, and particularly of that of baptiſm, as alſo of the light of faith, and of the grace we receive with it; but having handled this ſubject elſewhere, I ſhall add no more at preſent; yet I cannot paſs over in ſilence that grace of graces, that ſacrament of ſacraments, by virtue of which God is pleaſed to live with us on earth, to give himſelf every day to us as our food and as our ſovereign remedy. He was ſacrificed on the croſs but once for our ſakes, but here he is daily offered up to his Father on the altar, a propitiation for our ſins. *As often as you ſhall do this, do it*, ſays he, *in remembrance of me*, Luke xxii. 19. O precious pledge of our ſalvation! O divine ſacrifice! O moſt acceptable victim! Bread of life! Moſt delicious nouriſhment! Food of kings! O ſweet manna, which contains whatſoever is pleaſant and delightful! Who can ever be able to praiſe you according to your deſerts? Who can worthily receive? Who can honour you with due reſpect and reverence? My ſoul quite loſes itſelf when it thinks of you; my tongue fails me; nor am I able to expreſs the leaſt part of your wonders as I deſire to do it.

Had our Lord beſtowed this favour upon none but innocent and holy men, it would ſtill have been ineſtimable; how great then muſt this unparalleled charity be, which, after having moved him to communicate himſelf ſo freely to thoſe, has farther prevailed upon him to paſs through the impure hands of many wicked prieſts, whoſe ſouls are the habitations of devils, whoſe bodies are veſſels of corruption, whoſe lives are continual ſacrileges, and ſpent in nothing elſe but in ſin and iniquity? And yet, that he may viſit and comfort his friends, he ſuffers himſelf to be touched by ſuch polluted hands, to be received into their profane mouths, and to be buried in their noiſome and abominable breaſts. His body was ſold but once, but in this ſacrament he is ſold a thouſand times. He was ſcorned and deſpiſed but once in his paſſion, whereas theſe impious prieſts offer him infinite affronts and injuries at the very table of the altar. He was once crucified

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between two thieves, but here he is crucified millions of times in the hands of ſinners.

15. Who is there that will pretend, after all this, to be able to pay a due reſpect and honour to a Lord that has conſulted our intereſt ſo many ſeveral ways? What returns can we make him for ſo wonderful a nouriſhment? If ſervants ſerve their maſters for a poor livelihood, if ſoldiers for their pay expoſe themſelves to fire or ſword, what ought we to do for this Lord, who maintains us with this heavenly and immortal food? If God, in the old law, required ſo great an acknowledgment for the manna he ſent from Heaven, though it was a corruptible food, what returns will he expect for this, which, beſide its being exempt from corruption, makes all thoſe who receive it worthily incorruptible? If the Son of God thanks his father in the goſpel for only one meal of barley bread, what kind of thanks ſhould we give him for this bread of life? If we are ſo much indebted to him for the nouriſhment he gives us to preſerve our being, how much greater is our obligation for that food which preſerves in us the ſupernatural being of grace? For we do not commend a horſe purely becauſe he is a horſe, but becauſe he is a good horſe, nor wine becauſe it is wine, but becauſe it is good wine, nor man becauſe he is man, but becauſe he is a good man. If you are ſo much obliged to him that made you a man, how much greater is your obligation for having made you a good man? If the acknowledgment be ſo great, upon the account of corporal benefits, what ſhould it be for the ſpiritual? If you are ſo deeply indebted for the gifts of nature, how much more do you owe for thoſe of grace? And if, to conclude, his having made you a ſon of Adam lays ſo ſtrict a tie of gratitude upon you, how much muſt you be obliged to him for having made you a ſon of God himſelf? For, it is certainly true, as Euſebius Emiſſenus ſays, "That the day we are born to eternity is infinitely better than that which brought us forth to the toils and dangers of this world."

This, dear Chriſtian, is another motive, and, as it were, a new chain added to the others, to bind your heart the faſter, and oblige you to the purſuit of virtue and ſervice of this Lord.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the ſixth Motive that obliges us to the Love of Virtue, which is the Benefit of the Divine Predeſtination.

1. ADD to all the benefits we have hitherto ſpoken of, that of election, which belongs to none but thoſe whom God has choſen from all eternity to be partakers of his glory. It is for this ineſtimable benefit the Apoſtle thanks God, in his own and in the name of all the elect; when, in his Epiſtle to the Epheſians, he ſays, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who has bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt: as he has choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and unſpotted before him in love. Who has predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will*, Epheſ. i. 3, 4, 5. The royal Prophet highly extols this favour, when he ſays, *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt and receiveſt unto thee, he ſhall dwell in thy court*, Pſ. lxiv. 5. This therefore we may juſtly call the grace of graces, and benefit of benefits; in as much as God, purely out of his own goodneſs, beſtows it upon us before we deſerve it. For he, like one who is the abſolute maſter of his own riches, without wronging any man, but rather affording every one ſufficient aſſiſtance to work his ſalvation, pours out the abundance of his mercy on ſome particular perſons, without any limits or meaſure.

2. It is alſo the benefit of benefits, not only becauſe it is the greateſt, but becauſe it is the very ſource of all the reſt. For God, having choſen man for his glory, beſtows on him, through the means of this firſt favour, whatſoever is neceſſary for the obtaining of his glory, as he teſtifies by the mouth of one of his Prophets, in theſe words: *I have loved thee with an eternal love, and therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee*, Jerem. xxxi. 3. That is, I have called you to my grace, that by its help you may arrive at my glory. The Apoſtle expreſſes the ſame thing to us, in much clearer terms: *Whom God has foreknown, he has alſo predeſtinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he may be the firſt born amongſt many brethren. Moreover whom he has predeſtinated, them he has alſo called: and whom he has called, them he has juſtified; and whom he has juſtified, them he has alſo glorified.* Rom. viii. 29, 30. The reaſon of this is, becauſe as God diſpoſes all things ſweetly and regularly, he has no ſooner been pleaſed to chuſe a man

a man for his glory, but he beſtows upon him, on account of this grace, many others, and furniſhes him with a ſufficient ſupply of all things neceſſary for the obtaining of this firſt grace. So that as a father that has a deſign to bring one of his children up for the church or the bar employs him, whilſt he is but a child, about ſuch things as have a regard to the one or the other, and directs all the actions of his life to this end; ſo the eternal Father, when he has choſen a man for his glory, to which the way of juſtice leads us, takes care always to keep him right in this road, that ſo he may attain the end he is deſigned for.

It is fit therefore that thoſe who perceive in themſelves any tokens of this favour, ſhould thank God ſincerely and heartily for it. For though it is a ſecret hid from human eyes, yet there are certain ſigns of our election, as there are of our juſtification. And as the ſureſt mark of our juſtification is the converſion of our lives, ſo the beſt token of our election is our perſeverance in a good life; for he who has lived many years in the fear of the Lord, and has been very careful not to fall into any kind of ſin, may piouſly believe, that, according to the Apoſtle, *God will confirm him to the end, that he may be blameleſs in the day of the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. i. 8.

3. It is true, no man ought to think himſelf ſecure, ſince we ſee that Solomon, after he had led a pious life for ſeveral years, was ſeduced in his old age; but yet this example is only as a particular exception from a general rule, which is the ſame in effect with what the Apoſtle has taught us, which the ſame Solomon tells us, in his Proverbs, ch. xxii. 6. in theſe words, *It is a common ſaying, a young man according to his way, when he is old will not depart from it*; ſo that if he was virtuous in his youth he will be ſo when he is old. By theſe or ſuch like conjectures, which are to be met with in the writings of the ſaints, a man may humbly preſume that God, out of his infinite goodneſs, has made him one of the number of his elect. And as he hopes to be ſaved through God's mercy, ſo may he with all humility conclude he is of the number of thoſe that are to be ſaved, ſince the one pre-ſuppoſes the other.

This principle once ſettled, a man will ſoon ſee how ſtrictly he is obliged to ſerve God for ſo extraordinary a favour, as is that of having his name written in that book, whereof our Saviour, ſpeaking to his Apoſtles, ſays, *Rejoice not becauſe the ſpirits are ſubject to you, but rejoice becauſe your names are written in Heaven*, Luke x. 20. For what greater benefit can there be,

than to have been beloved and choſen from all eternity, ever ſince God has been God; to have been lodged in his boſom, and made choice of by him for his adopted child, when he begot his own Son according to nature in the glory of the ſaints, who were then all really preſent in the Divine underſtanding?

4. Weigh therefore all circumſtances of this election, and you will find that each of them is an extraordinary favour and a new obligation to ſerve God. Conſider the dignity of him who has elected you; it is God himſelf who, as being infinitely rich and infinitely happy, had no need of you or of any body elſe in the world. Reflect next upon the perſon elected, how unworthy he is of ſuch a grace, ſince he is no better than a poor mortal creature, expoſed to all the neceſſities, infirmities and miſeries of this life, and worthy for his ſins to be condemned to eternal torments in the next. Obſerve how glorious an election this is, ſince the end for which you have been elected is ſo noble that nothing can be above it; for what can be greater than to become the Son of God, the heir to his kingdom, and ſharer with him in his glory? Examine, in the next place, how gratuitous this election was, ſince it was before all merit whatſoever, proceeding only from the good will of God Almighty, and, according to the Apoſtle, *to the praiſe of the glory of his grace*, Epheſ. i. 6. For the more generous and free a favour is, the greater obligation it lays on him that receive it. Conſider alſo how ancient this election is, for it did not begin with the world, but was long before it, for it is co-eternal with God, who being himſelf from all eternity, has in like manner from all eternity loved his elect, has always had them in his Divine preſence, and has them there ſtill, beholding them with a fatherly eye of love, and being always reſolved to confer ſo great a favour on them. Conſider, after all, how particular this benefit is, ſince he has been pleaſed to honour you with ſo infinite a bleſſing, as is the admitting of you into the number of his elect, whilſt there are ſo many nations quite ignorant of him, and which he has rejected, and therefore he ſeparated you from the maſs of perdition, to raiſe you to a holy union with his ſaints, making that which was the leaven of corruption become the bread of angels. Such a grace ſhould put a ſtop to our pens and tongues, that we may be wholly taken up in the acknowledging and admiring of it, and in learning what returns we are to make for it. But what ſhould give a greater value to this favour, is the ſmall number of the elect, whilſt that of the damned is ſo great, that Solomon, Eccl. i. 15, calls it *infinite:*

finite: the number of fools, that is, of the reprobate, *is infinite.* But if none of all theſe conſiderations is able to make any impreſſion on you, be moved at leaſt by the exceſſive price this ſovereign elector has given to purchaſe you; it is no leſs than the life and blood of his only begotten Son, whom he from all eternity reſolved to ſend down into the world, to put this his Divine decree in execution.

5. If this be true, what time can ſuffice to ſpend in humble reflections upon ſo many mercies? What tongue can be eloquent enough to expreſs them? What heart capacious enough to conceive them? What returns and acknowledgments be made for them? With what love ſhall a man be ever able to repay this eternal love? Can any man be ſo baſe as to defer loving of God to the end of his life, when God has had ſuch a love for him from all eternity? Who will part with ſuch a friend as this is for any friend in this world? For if the ſcripture ſets ſuch a value upon an old friend, how much ought we to prize that friendſhip which is eternal. *Forſake not an old friend, for a new one will not be like him*, Eccl. ix. 14. If this advice holds good in all caſes, who is there that will not prefer this friend before all the friends in the world? And if it be true, that poſſeſſion, time out of mind, gives him a title that had none before, what muſt a poſſeſſion do that has been everlaſting? It is eternity that has entitled God to the poſſeſſion of us, that he might by this means make us his.

6. What riches or honour can there be in the world which a man ſhould not give in exchange for this bleſſing? What troubles or misfortunes which we ought not to ſuffer for purchaſing of it? Is there any man, though ever ſo wicked, that would not fall down and kiſs the ground a beggar trod on, were he aſſured by Divine revelation that the beggar was predeſtinated to everlaſting happineſs, that would not run after him, and, proſtrating himſelf at his feet, call him a thouſand times happy? Who is there that would not cry out, O bleſſed ſoul, is it poſſible that you ſhould be one of this happy number of the elect? Is it poſſible that God ſhould have made choice of you from all eternity, to ſee him one day in all his beauty and glory? that he ſhould have choſen you to be a companion and brother to the elect? Are you one of thoſe who are to be ſeated amongſt the quires of angels? Muſt you hear the heavenly muſic? And ſhall you behold the reſplendent face of Jeſus Chriſt and of his holy mother? Happy the day which firſt brought you into the world, but much happier

pier that of your death, becauſe then you ſhall begin to live for ever. Happy the bread you eat and the ground you tread on, ſince it bears ſuch an ineſtimable treaſure! But much more happy thoſe pains you indure, ſince they open you the way to eternal eaſe and reſt! For what clouds of afflictions can there be which the aſſurance of this happineſs will not diſperſe.

7. We ſhould doubtleſs break out into ſuch tranſports as theſe, did we behold a predeſtinated perſon, and knew him to be ſo. For if all people run out to ſee a young prince, that is heir to ſome great kingdom, as he paſſes through the ſtreet, admiring his good fortune, as the world accounts it, to inherit large dominions, how much more reaſon have we to admire the happineſs of a man elected from his birth, without any precedent merits on his ſide, not to a temporal kingdom in this world, but to an eternal crown of glory in Heaven.

8. Here you may learn how great thoſe obligations are which the elect owe to God, for ſo unſpeakable a favour. And yet there is not one of us all, if we do what is required of us, that is to look upon himſelf as excluded this number. On the contrary, *every one ſhould uſe his endeavours*, according to St. Peter, *to make his calling and election ſure, by good works.* 2 Pet. i. 10. For we are moſt certain that he who does ſo, ſhall not miſs of his ſalvation: and, what is more, we know that God has never yet refuſed, nor ever will refuſe, any man his grace and aſſiſtance. It is therefore our main buſineſs, ſince we are aſſured of theſe two points, to continue in the doing of good works, that we may by that means be of the number of thoſe happy ſouls whom God has choſen to be partakers of his glory for ever.

CHAP. VII.

Of the ſeventh Motive that obliges us to the Purſuit of Virtue, which is Death, the firſt of the four laſt Things.

1. ANY one of the aforementioned motives ought to be ſufficient to perſuade men to give themſelves up entirely to the ſervice of a maſter that has obliged them with ſo many favours. But, becauſe duty and juſtice have leſs influence over the generality of mankind, than profit and intereſt,

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I will therefore add thoſe great advantages which are propoſed as the recompence and reward of virtue, both in this life and in the next, and ſhall firſt ſpeak of the two greateſt, viz. the glory we ſhall acquire and the puniſhment we ſhall avoid, by faithfully adhering to it. Theſe are the two oars that are ſo ſerviceable to us in this voyage; they are, as it were, the compaſs by which we may ſteer our courſe more ſteadily and ſecurely. This is the reaſon why St. Francis and St. Dominick, in their rules, both of them moved by the ſame ſpirit, and making uſe of the very ſame words, commanded the preachers of their orders, never to take any other ſubjects of their ſermons but virtue and vice, Heaven and hell; the one to inſtruct us how to live well, the other to incline us to it. It is a received opinion amongſt philoſophers, that reward and puniſhment are, as it were, the two ſprings which make the wheels of man's life turn round in a regular motion. For ſuch, alas! is our unhappineſs, and ſo great a corruption of our nature, that no body can endure naked virtue, that is to ſay, if the fear of puniſhment does not go along with it, or the hopes of a reward attend it. But ſince there is no puniſhment nor reward which can ſo juſtly deſerve our conſideration as thoſe which are never to have an end, we will therefore ſpeak here of everlaſting glory and everlaſting torments, together with thoſe other two things that are to precede them, which are death and judgment. For any one of theſe points conſidered with attention may be infinitely advantageous to the making us love virtue and hate vice, according to that of the wiſe man, where he ſays: *In all that thou undertakeſt remember thy laſt end, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs*, Eccl. vii. 40. He means here thoſe four things, we have juſt now mentioned, and which we are going to diſcourſe upon.

SECTION I.

2. To begin with the firſt, which is death. The reaſon why this of all the reſt works moſt upon us, is its being the moſt certain, the moſt frequent, and the moſt familiar of them all, eſpecially if we reflect upon the particular judgment that is to be given upon the whole courſe of our lives at that time, which, when once paſt, will not be reverſed at the general judgment day; but whatſoever be then decreed ſhall ſtand good for ever. But how rigorous this judgment will be, and how ſevere an account will be taken of all our actions, I do not deſire you ſhould believe upon my bare allegation, but that you give credit to a paſſage related by St. John Climachus upon this

this point, to which he himſelf was an eye witneſs, and is indeed one of the dreadfulleſt I ever read in my life. He tells us, "there was a certain monk in his time, called Heſychius, who lived in a cell upon mount Horeb. Having led a very careleſs and negligent ſort of life during the whole time of his retirement, without ſo much as ever thinking of his ſalvation, he was at laſt taken very ill, and being paſt all hopes of recovery, laid for about the ſpace of an hour as if he had been quite dead. But afterwards coming to himſelf again, he earneſtly deſired that we would all go out of his cell. As ſoon as ever we had left him, he walled up his door, and remained thus, ſhut up within his cell, for twelve years, never ſpeaking one word to any body during all this time. He lived upon nothing but bread and water; and continued always ſitting, keeping his whole thoughts, as if he had been in a perpetual extaſy, ſo bent upon what he had ſeen in his viſion, that he never ſo much as once altered the poſture he was in, but remaining, as it were, always out of his ſenſes, and in a deep ſilence wept moſt bitterly. A little before his death we broke open his door, and went into his cell, earneſtly deſiring him to ſpeak ſome words of edification. But all we could ever get from him was: *Pardon me, my brethren, if I have nothing elſe to ſay to you, but this; that he who has the thoughts of death deeply imprinted in his mind, can never ſin.*" Theſe are St. John Climachus's own words, who was preſent when this happened, and relates nothing but what he ſaw; ſo that though the paſſage may ſeem incredible, there is no cauſe to miſtruſt the truth of it, ſince we have it from ſo grave and ſo credible an author. There is nothing which we ought not to fear when we conſider the life this holy man led, but much more if we enquire into the frightful viſion that was the occaſion of his long penance. This evidently makes out the truth of that ſaying of the wiſe man: *Be mindful of thy laſt end, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs.* Eccl. vii. 40. If then this conſideration be of ſuch force to make us avoid ſin, let us briefly reflect upon the moſt remarkable circumſtances that attend it, to the end we may by this means obtain ſo great a benefit.

3. Remember therefore that you are a man and a Chriſtian. As man you know you are to die, and as a Chriſtian you know you are to give an account of your life as ſoon as dead. Daily experience will not permit us to doubt of the one, nor the faith we profeſs let us call the other into queſtion. Every one of us all lies under this neceſſity. Kings and popes muſt

ſubmit

ſubmit to it. The day will come when you ſhall not live to ſee night, or a night when you ſhall not ſurvive till day. The day will come, and you know not whether it may not be this very day or to-morrow, when you yourſelf, who are now reading this treatiſe in perfect health, and who perhaps think the number of your days will be anſwerable to your buſineſs and wiſhes, ſhall be ſtretched out in your bed, with a taper in your hand, expecting the laſt ſtroke of death and the execution of that ſentence which is paſt upon all mankind, and from which there is no appeal. Conſider then the uncertainty of this hour, for generally it ſurprizes us when we leaſt think of it, and is therefore ſaid to come like a thief in the night; that is, when men are faſteſt aſleep. A violent and mortal ſickneſs is the uſual forerunner of death and of all its accidents. Pains, aches, diſtractions, griefs, ravings, long and tedious nights, which quite tire and wear us out, are but ſo many ways and diſpoſitions towards it. And as we ſee that an enemy, before he can force his entrance into a town, muſt batter down the walls, ſo the forerunner of death is ſome raging diſtemper, which ſo furiouſly without intermiſſion batters down our natural vigour, and breaks in upon the chief parts of the body that the ſoul, not able to hold out any longer, is obliged to ſurrender.

4. But when the ſickneſs grows deſperate, and the phyſician or the diſtemper itſelf undeceive us, by leaving us no hopes of life, how great is our anguiſh at that time? Then it is we begin with concern and ſorrow to think of departing this life, and of forſaking whatſoever we here held moſt dear. Wife, children, friends, relations, eſtates, dignities, employs, all vaniſh when we die. Next follow thoſe laſt accidents that attend us juſt upon our going off, which are much more grievous than all the reſt; the feet grow cold, the noſe ſhrinks in, the tongue ſtammers and is incapable of performing its duty, in fine, all the ſenſes and members are in confuſion and diſorder upon ſo ſudden and haſty a departure. Thus man, at his going out of the world, by his own ſufferings pays back thoſe pains he put others to when he came into it; ſo that there is no great difference as to the matter of ſuffering betwixt his birth and his death, ſince they are both of them attended with grief, the firſt with that his mother endured, and the laſt with what he endures himſelf.

5. Nor is this all that makes this laſt paſſage ſo terrible: for after theſe violent fits and anguiſhes, there appears before him the agony of death, the end of life, the horror of the grave,

grave, the miſerable condition of the body, juſt ready to be preyed upon by worms: but what is more dreadful yet than all the reſt, is the lamentable ſtate of the poor ſoul, as yet ſhut up in the body, but knows not where ſhe ſhall be within two hours; it is then you will imagine yourſelf before the judgment-ſeat of Almighty God, and all your ſins riſing up againſt you; it is then, unhappy man, you will be ſenſible of the heinouſneſs of thoſe crimes you committed with ſo little concern; it is then you will curſe a thouſand times the day in which you ſinned, and thoſe pleaſures which were the occaſions of your offences: your condition will be ſo deplorable that you will never be able ſufficiently to admire your own blindneſs and folly, when you ſhall ſee for what triſles for all you have ſo fooliſhly ſet your affections on are no better; you have expoſed yourſelf to the danger of ſuffering moſt exquiſite torments, which you will even then be ſenſible of: for the pleaſures being now all over, and the judgment that is to be paſſed upon them beginning to draw on, that which of itſelf was little and now ceaſes to be ſeems nothing, and that which of itſelf is of ſo much weight and conſequence, being preſent, appears clearly juſt as it is: thus will you become ſenſible of the danger you have expoſed yourſelf to, of loſing ſo much bliſs for the enjoyment of mere vanities, and which way ſoever you turn your eyes you will ſee you are ſurrounded with ſubjects of ſorrow and trouble; for you have no time left to do penance, the glaſs of your life is run out, nor muſt you expect the leaſt aſſiſtance from your friends or from thoſe idols you have hitherto adored; nay, what you have had the moſt affection for will be the greateſt torment and affliction to you then. Tell me now, if you can, what your thoughts will be at that time, when you ſhall ſee yourſelf reduced to ſuch extremities? whither will you run? what will you do? or whom will you have recourſe to? To go back is impoſſible, to go forward intolerable, to continue as you are is not allowed; what is it then you will do? *Then ſays* God, by the mouth of his Prophet, *the ſun ſhall go down at noon-day, and I will darken the earth in the clear day, and I will turn your feaſts into mourning, and all your ſongs into lamentation; and your laſt day into a day of bitterneſs*, Amos viii. 9, 10. Is there any thing more dreadful than theſe words? God ſays the ſun ſhall go down at mid-day, becauſe then the wicked having the multitude of their ſins laid before them, and perceiving God's juſtice is beginning to ſhorten the courſe of their life, many of them ſhall be ſeized with ſuch dread and deſpair as to imagine

gine that God has entirely removed his mercy from them. So that though they are ſtill in broad day, that is, within the bounds of life, a time to merit good or evil, they ſhall perſuade themſelves that do what they can, it is loſt, ſince it is impoſſible for them to obtain pardon. Fear is a very powerful paſſion; it makes thoſe things which are little ſeem great, and gives us a near view of that which is fartheſt from us. If a light apprehenſion has been able ſometimes to do ſo much, what muſt a certain and real danger do? Though they ſee they have a little life left, and all their friends about them, yet they fancy they already begin to feel the torments of the damned in hell. They look upon themſelves as between life and death, and grieving at the loſs of the goods of this life, which they are juſt ready to part with, they begin to ſuffer the pains of the next, which they apprehend. They think thoſe men happy whom they leave behind them, and envying the condition of others, encreaſe their own miſery. It is then the ſun ſhall truly ſet to them at noon-day, when, which way ſoever they look, the way to Heaven ſhall ſeem to be blocked up againſt them, and they ſhall not ſee ſo much as the leaſt glimmering of light. If they look up towards God's mercy, they think themſelves unworthy of it, if they reflect upon his juſtice, they imagine it is now going to fall upon them; that till then it has been their day, but now it is the day of God's wrath; if they conſider their lives paſt, there is ſcarce one moment but what riſes up in judgment againſt them; if they reflect upon the preſent time, they ſee themſelves upon their death-beds; if they look forward, they imagine they ſee the judge waiting for them. What can they do, or whither can they fly from ſo many objects of fear and terror?

6. The Prophet tells them, *that God will darken the earth in the clear day;* which is, that thoſe things which they have moſt delighted in before ſhall now become the greateſt occaſions of their ſorrow. A man in perfect health loves to ſee his children, his friends, his family, his riches, and whatſoever elſe can be any way agreeable to him; but this light ſhall be then turned into darkneſs, becauſe all theſe things will be a great affliction to a dying man: and there is nothing will be a greater torment to him than that he moſt delighted in. For as naturally we are pleaſed in the poſſeſſion of what we love, ſo are we equally troubled and concerned at the loſs of it. This is the reaſon why they will not let a man's children come near him when he is dying; and why women, that are

unwilling

unwilling to loſe their huſbands, keep from them at this time, for fear the ſight of one another ſhould encreaſe grief and ſorrow. And though the journey is ſo long, and the time he is to be abſent ſo tedious, yet grief breaks through all the rules of good breeding, and ſcarce allows him that is departing leiſure to bid his friends adieu. If you have ever been in this condition, you cannot but acknowledge all that I ſay to be true, but if you have never yet made the experiment, believe thoſe that have. *Let them who have been at ſea recount the dangers they have met with there*, Eccl. xliii. 26.

SECTION II.

7. If the circumſtances and accidents which go before death are ſo frightful, what muſt thoſe be which follow it? Death has no ſooner cloſed the ſick man's eyes, than he is brought before the judgment-ſeat of Almighty God to give up his accounts to him, who will revenge himſelf with ſeverity and terror of the crimes which have been committed againſt him. For the underſtanding of this, you are not to enquire of the men of the world, who living in Egypt, that is, in darkneſs and ignorance, are always expoſed to miſtakes and errors. Aſk the ſaints, who dwell in the land of Jeſſen, where the light of this truth ſhines always in its full vigour. They will tell you, not only by their words, but by their actions, how terrible this account will be.

For David, though ſo holy a man, was ſo prepoſſeſſed with this fear, and with the juſt apprehenſions of the account he was to give, that he begged of God, ſaying, *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, O Lord, for in thy ſight no man living ſhall be juſtified*, Pſ. cxlii. 2. Arſenius was a great ſaint, and who had lived a very virtuous and rigid life for ſeveral years in the deſert; and yet, finding that he had but a very little time to live, he was ſeized with ſuch apprehenſions of this judgment, that his diſciples, who were all gathered together about him, perceiving it, aſked him this queſtion: 'Father, are you afraid now?' To which the holy man made anſwer: 'This is no new fear, which you obſerve in me now, my children; it is what I have been ſenſible of all my lifetime.' They write that St. Agatho, when he was near his death, was ſeized with the ſame apprehenſions, and being aſked what he could be afraid of, who had lived ſo virtuouſly: he ſaid, 'becauſe the judgments of God are quite different from thoſe of men.' St. John Climachus gives us another, no leſs dreadful example of a holy monk, which being very remarkable, I will here relate in the ſaint's own words. "There was a certain religious

gious man, ſays he, called Stephen, that lived in this place, after having ſpent a great many years in a monaſtery, where he was very much in repute, upon account of his tears and faſting, and where he had enriched his ſoul with ſeveral other excellent virtues; but having an extreme deſire to lead a ſolitary and retired life, he built himſelf a cell at the bottom of mount Horeb, where the Prophet Elias had the honour in former times to ſee God. This man, notwithſtanding his great auſterity and rigour, thinking that what he did was not enough and aſpiring to a more rigid and ſevere way of living, went to another place called Siden, where ſome holy anchorets lived. Here he continued for ſome years in the ſevereſt and ſtricteſt life imaginable, deſtitute of all human comfort and converſation, having ſeated his hermitage about threeſcore and ten miles from any town. But the good old man, towards the end of his life, came back again to his firſt cell, at the foot of mount Horeb, having there with him two diſciples that were natives of Paleſtine, and had retired thither not long before he came back. Within a few days after his return, he fell into his laſt ſickneſs. The day before he died, being in a kind of extaſy, but with his eyes open, and gazing firſt on one ſide of his bed and then on the other, juſt as if he had ſeen ſome perſons there who made him give an account of his life, he anſwered ſo loud that every body there could hear him, ſometimes ſaying, 'Yes, I confeſs it; that is true; but I have faſted ſo many years in ſatisfaction for the ſin.' Sometimes he was heard to ſay, 'That is falſe, you wrong me, I never did any ſuch thing.' Immediately after: 'As to that, I acknowledge it. You are in the right, but I have bewailed the ſame, and have done penance for it, by ſerving my neighbour upon ſuch and ſuch occaſions.' Then again he cried out: 'That is not true; you are all impoſtors.' But to other accuſations, he anſwered: 'It is true; and I have nothing to ſay to this point, but that our God is a God of mercy.' Certainly this inviſible judgment being ſo ſevere, could not but be frightful and terrible. And what ought to make it more dreadful, they laid ſuch crimes to his charge as he had never been guilty of. O my God! if an hermit, after about forty years ſpent in a religious and ſolitary life, after having obtained the gift of tears, declared that he had nothing to ſay for himſelf as to ſome ſins that were brought againſt him, what will become of ſuch a miſerable and unhappy wretch as I am? Nay, what is more yet, I have been very credibly informed by ſeveral, that whilſt he lived in the deſert he uſed

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to feed a leopard with his own hands. He died as he was giving this account of himſelf, leaving us in an entire uncertainty of the end of this judgment and of the ſentence that was paſſed upon him." Thus far St. John Climachus. By this we may plainly ſee, what apprehenſions and fears a man that has lived idly and careleſly muſt be in when he comes to die, ſince ſuch great ſaints as theſe have been ſo hard put to it at this time.

8. Should you aſk one, what there is in death that can fright ſuch holy men, I will anſwer you out of St. Gregory's fourth book of his Morals, ch. 16, 17, 18, where he ſays, " The ſaints ſeriouſly conſidering how juſt the judge is, to whom they are to give an account of all their actions, are continually thinking upon the laſt moment of their lives, and carefully examining themſelves upon what anſwer they ſhall make to every queſtion their judge ſhall put to them. But if they find themſelves free from all thoſe ſinful actions which they might have committed, another ſubject of their apprehenſion is, leſt they ſhould have conſented to thoſe bad thoughts which man's corruption always expoſes him to. For let us put the caſe, that the overcoming of ſuch temptations as lead us on to the performance of ſome ſinful action is no very hard matter, yet you will not find it ſo eaſy to ſecure yourſelf againſt the continual war, raiſed by bad thoughts. And though theſe holy men are always afraid of the ſecret judgments of ſo juſt a judge, yet they then particularly fear them moſt, when they are neareſt the point of diſcharging the common debt of nature, and when they perceive themſelves advancing nigher to their ſovereign Maſter. But this fear of theirs is much greater at that time when the ſoul is juſt going to leave the body. Then it is that the mind is no longer filled with idle thoughts, nor the imagination drawn away by impertinent fancies. Neither does he, that has now done with this world, think of any thing at all that is in it. Dying men think of nothing but themſelves, and God who is juſt before them. They look upon every thing elſe as no concern of theirs. But, if whilſt they are in this condition, they cannot think of any good action which they have knowingly omitted, they are afraid leſt they might have omitted that which they did not know; becauſe they cannot paſs a true judgment upon themſelves, nor have a perfect knowledge of their own failings. This is the reaſon of their being ſeized at their death with ſuch great and ſecret apprehenſions, becauſe they know they are upon entering into a ſtate which

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they ſhall never afterwards be able to change." Theſe are St Gregory's own words, which plainly ſhew us there is much more to be feared in this judgment, and at this laſt hour, than worldly men imagine.

9. If this judgment is ſo rigorous, and has been ſo much and ſo juſtly dreaded by holy men, what apprehenſions ought theirs to be who are not ſo? they who have ſpent the greateſt part of their lives in vanities and trifles, who have ſo frequently deſpiſed God, and his commandments, who have ſcarce ſo much as ever thought of their ſalvation, and have taken ſo little pains to prepare themſelves for this laſt hour? If the juſt man be ready to ſink under the weight of his fear, how ſhall the ſinner be able to keep up? If the cedar of Lebanon be thus ſhaken, what will become of the reed in the wilderneſs? And in ſhort, *If*, as St. Peter ſays, *the juſt man ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?* 1 Pet. iv. 18. Tell me now, after all this, what will be your thoughts at that laſt hour, when, having left this world, you appear before the Divine tribunal in a lonely, poor and naked condition, without any other aſſiſtance but what your own good works will bring you, without any other company but that of your own conſcience, there to be tried, not for a temporal life or death, but an eternal; and if your accounts fall ſhort, how miſerable will your condition be? What ſhame and confuſion will your paſt neglects put you to? The princes of Judah were without doubt very much ſurprized, when they ſaw the conqueror Seſach, king of Egypt, putting all Jeruſalem to the ſword. Their preſent puniſhment brought them to a ſenſe of their former crimes, and yet what was all this in compariſon with the trouble and diſorder the wicked ſhall be in, when they are near their end? what ſhall they do, whither ſhall they go, or what defence ſhall they be able to make? Their tears will be then unprofitable to them, their repentance will not avail, their prayers will not be taken notice of, nor their promiſes of a future amendment regarded; they will have no more time given them to do penance; and as for their riches, their honours, or the reſpect the world gave them, they will ſignify leaſt of any thing. For, according to the wiſe man, *riches ſhall not be profitable in the day of vengeance, but juſtice will deliver a man from death*, Prov. xi. 4. What will a poor ſoul do when it ſees itſelf ſurrounded with ſo many miſeries? what will it do but cry out, with the royal Pſalmiſt, *The ſorrows of death have encompaſſed me, and the dangers of hell have found me out*, Pſ. cxiv. 3. Unhappy wretch that

that I am! what a miſerable condition have my ſins reduced me to? how unexpectedly has this unfortunate hour ſtolen upon me? how ſuddenly has it ſurprized me when I leaſt thought of it? what good will all my former titles and honours do me now? All my friends and ſervants, thoſe riches and revenues which I have once been maſter of, what ſervice can I expect from them now? Six or ſeven feet of land at the moſt, with a poor winding ſheet to bury me in, is like to be my whole inheritance; and to complete my miſery, all that money I have been ſo long raking up, with ſo much pains and injuſtice, I muſt now leave behind me, to be ſquandered away by an extravagant heir, whilſt the ſins I have been guilty of in getting it, will follow me into the next world to condemn me to eternal torments. Where is now the delight I took in all my former recreations and pleaſures? They are now at an end for ever, and nothing but the dregs of them remains; that is, the ſcruples and remorſe of my guilty conſcience, the ſtings of which pierce my very heart, and will torment me for all eternity. Why did I not rather employ my time in preparing myſelf againſt this laſt hour? How often have I been forewarned of what I ſuffer, but would never give ear to the advice? *Why have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that inſtructed me?* Prov. v. 12, 13. I have committed all kinds of ſins and iniquities, in the very boſom of the church and in the ſight of all the world.

10. See here what anxieties and diſquiets the wicked will be racked with. See here what a burden their own thoughts will be to them in this miſerable condition. But to preſerve you from falling into the ſame misfortunes, I here adviſe you to gather from what has been ſaid theſe three conſiderations, and to keep them continually in your mind. The firſt is, that of the trouble you will be in at the hour of your death, for all thoſe ſins you have committed againſt God during the whole courſe of your life. The ſecond is, how you will wiſh to have ſerved him, that he might be favourable to you at this moment. The laſt is, what a rigid penance you would willingly undergo in the world, if you could but obtain the favour of returning thither, that you might begin from that very moment to live as you will then deſire to have lived before.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the eight Motive that obliges us to the Purſuit of Virtue, which is the laſt Judgment, the ſecond of the four laſt Things.

1. AS ſoon as ever the ſoul has left the body, immediately follows its particular judgment, and after that, the general one of all mankind together; at which time ſhall be accompliſhed what the Apoſtle ſaid: *We muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may be repaid the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad,* 2 Cor. v. 10. Having treated, in another place, of thoſe dreadful ſigns which are to be the forerunners of the general judgment day, I ſhall ſpeak here of nothing but that ſevere and exact account which will be then required from us, and of what is to follow it, that this may teach man how much he is obliged to the purſuit of virtue.

2. As to the firſt, which is the ſtrict enquiry God will make into all our actions, it is ſo frightful that there was ſcarce any thing ſurprized holy Job more than to conſider that God, whoſe majeſty is ſo great, could ſhew ſo much rigour towards man, notwithſtanding his being ſo frail a creature, as to ſet down every word, every thought, every motion of his, in his book of juſtice, to require a particular account thereof. After having ſaid a great deal to this purpoſe, he goes on thus: *Why doſt thou hide thy face, and lookeſt upon me as thy enemy? Thou exerciſeſt thy power againſt a leaf which is driven to and fro by the wind, and thou purſueſt the dry ſtubble. For thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and haſt a mind to deſtroy me for the ſins of my youth; thou haſt put my feet in the ſtocks, and haſt obſerved all my paths, and haſt taken notice of the ſteps of my feet. I who am to be conſumed as a rotten thing, and as a garment that is moth-eaten,* Job xiii. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

Immediately after he adds, *Man that is born of a woman, and has but a ſhort time to live, is full of miſeries. He comes forth like a flower, and is trodden down; he flies away like a ſhadow, and never continues in the ſame ſtate. And doſt thou think fit to open thy eyes upon ſuch a one, and to bring him into judgment with thee? Who can make that clean which is conceived of unclean ſeed? Who but thou alone?* Ib. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. Theſe are the terrible words which Job ſpoke, filled with ſurprize and aſtoniſhment at the ſeverity the Divine juſtice exerciſes againſt ſo poor and helpleſs a creature as man; againſt one ſo bent upon any thing

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that is evil, and that drinks up iniquity like water. For if God ſhould be ſo ſevere to the angels, who are ſpiritual and very perfect creatures, it would not be a matter of ſo much wonder. But for his juſtice to call men, whoſe vicious inclinations are numberleſs, to ſo ſtrict an account as not to paſs over any one circumſtance of their whole lives, not to leave out any one idle word, nor ſo much as one moment of time that has been miſemployed, without a very narrow enquiry into it, is a ſubject of the greateſt amazement. For who can hear theſe words of our Saviour without aſtoniſhment? *I ſay unto you, that men ſhall give an account at the day of judgment of every idle world which they ſhall have ſpoken*, Mat. xiv. 36. If we are to give an account of ſuch words as theſe are, that hurt no body, what an examination will be made into lewd diſcourſes, unchaſte thoughts, bloody hands and laſcivious looks? what, in ſhort, into all that time men have ſpent in committing of ſinful actions? And if this be all true, as doubtleſs it is, what can a man ſay of the ſeverity of this judgment, but will fall far ſhort of it? What a fright will poor man be in, to ſee himſelf accuſed before ſo venerable an aſſembly, of ſome light word he ſpoke in his lifetime, without any deſign or intention? Who will not be ſurpriſed at ſo ſtrange a charge? or who would have dared to affirm this, had not God himſelf ſaid it? Was there ever any prince that called his ſervant to account for the loſs of a pin or a needle? O the excellency of Chriſtian religion! what perfection and purity doſt thou teach, and how ſtrict an account wilt thou require of it, and with how rigorous a judgment wilt thou examine into it?

3. Now if this judgment day be ſo great a ſubject of all mens aſtoniſhment, what ſhame and confuſion muſt ſinners be then put to? For all the wickedneſs they have ever committed, with ſo much caution and privacy in their moſt ſecret cloſets, all the impurities they have ever been defiled with, and all the evil that has lain hid in the darkeſt receſſes of their ſouls, ſhall be then made public and expoſed to the view of all the world. Is there any man now whoſe conſcience is ſo clear as not to begin to bluſh and be afraid of this confuſion? We ſee how often it happens that men, upon no other motive but that of a ſinful and criminal ſhame, will not diſcover their ſecret ſins to their confeſſors, not even in confeſſion, where the obligation to privacy is ſo inviolable and the tie ſo ſacred. They, for no other reaſon but this, chuſe rather to let their ſouls be preſſed down under the weight of their ſins, than to undergo the ſhame of revealing them. How great then will that ſhame be which

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men ſhall be put to before God, and in the ſight of all ages, paſt, preſent and to come? The Prophet tells us this confuſion will be ſo extraordinary, that the wicked *ſhall ſay to the mountains, cover us, and to the hills, fall upon us*, that we may not be expoſed to ſuch ſhame. Hoſ. x. 8.

4. But what horror will they be filled with, at the hearing of this laſt ſentence thundered out againſt them, *Depart from me, ye accurſed, into everlaſting fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. What will the damned think at the ſound of thoſe dreadful words? *If*, ſays Job, *we can ſcarce endure the leaſt ſound of his voice, who ſhall be able to look againſt the thunder of his greatneſs?* Job xxvi. 14. This word will carry ſuch terror and force along with it, that it will make the earth open in a moment, to ſwallow up and bury in its bowels thoſe who, as the ſame Job ſays, ch. xxi. 12. *Take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the ſound of the organ.* St. John, in his Revelation, deſcribes this fall in theſe words: *I ſaw an angel come down from Heaven, having great power, and the earth was enlightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a ſtrong voice, ſaying, Babylon the great is fallen, it is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul ſpirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* Revel. xviii. 1, 2. In the ſame place the holy Evangeliſt adds, *And a mighty angel took up a ſtone like a millſtone, and caſt it into the ſea, ſaying, Thus with violence ſhall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all.* After the ſame manner ſhall the wicked, who are to be underſtood here by Babylon, be flung into the dungeons of everlaſting darkneſs and confuſion.

5. But what tongue can be able to expreſs the multitude of torments they are to ſuffer there? Their bodies ſhall burn in ſcorching flames, which ſhall never be extinguiſhed; the worm of conſcience ſhall perpetually gnaw and tear their very ſouls in pieces, without ever being tired or ſatisfied. It is there that weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth, we are ſo often threatened with in holy ſcripture, ſhall never ceaſe. There it is that the damned, hurried on with rage and deſpair, ſhall vent their fury upon God and themſelves, biting off their fleſh, burſting their hearts with ſighs and grief, breaking their teeth with grinning and vexation, like madmen pulling their own limbs in pieces, and continually blaſpheming that juſt God who has condemned them to ſuch torments. There every one of them will a thouſand times curſe the hour of his birth, frequently repeating, though with a different ſpirit, theſe words of holy Job: *Let the day periſh wherein I was*

born, and the night in which it was ſaid, a man-child is conceived. Let that day be turned into darkneſs, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light ſhine upon it. Let darkneſs and the ſhadow of death obſcure it, let a cloud overcaſt it, and let it be wrapt up in terror. As for that night, let a dark tempeſt ſeize upon it, let it not be reckoned amongſt the days of the year, nor come into the number of the months. Why died I not in the womb? Why did I not give up the ghoſt when I came out of the belly? Why was I placed upon the knee? or why had I the breaſt to ſuck? Job iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12. Theſe are the complaints the damned ſhall make in hell for all eternity. O unhappy tongues, which ſhall never utter any thing but blaſphemies! O wretched ears, which ſhall never hear any thing but frightful ſhrieks and groans! O unfortunate eyes, which ſhall never ſee any thing but objects of miſery! O wretched bodies, which, inſtead of being refreſhed, ſhall be eternally burning in hell-flames! What a condition will thoſe ſenſual perſons be in then, who have ſpent all their days in ſports and delights? O! for how ſhort and how fleeting a pleaſure have they brought upon themſelves an endleſs train of miſeries? Fooliſh and ſenſeleſs creatures! what do all your paſtimes which laſted ſo ſhort a time avail you, when the conſequence is an eternity of pain and ſorrow? What is now become of all your riches and treaſures? Where are now your delights? Your ſeven fruitful years are now over, and ſee they are followed by ſeven years of ſuch barrenneſs that your former abundance is all ſwallowed up, and not the leaſt ſign or memory of it remains. Your honour is loſt and your happineſs drowned in that ocean of ſorrow. You are reduced to ſuch extremity as not to be allowed one ſingle drop of water to quench the ſcorching thirſt which parches up your very bowels; nay, your paſt proſperity is ſo far from giving you any comfort now, that it is rather one of your greateſt torments. For then ſhall be fulfilled this ſaying of Job: *The delight of the wicked ſhall be changed into worms*, Job xxiv. 20. Which, according to St. Gregory, will happen, when the remembrance of their paſt pleaſures ſhall be an increaſe of their preſent torments, when they ſhall call to mind the days they have ſeen and thoſe they now ſee; thus unhappily experiencing at their own coſt, that for things of ſo ſhort a continuance they ſuffer miſeries which ſhall never have an end. Then they will plainly ſee how the enemy has deceived them, and being now, though too late, ſenſible of their folly, they will begin to make uſe of theſe words in the book of Wiſdom: *We fools have wandered out of the way of truth, and the light of juſtice has not ſhined upon us, and the ſun of underſtanding*

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ſtanding has not roſe upon us. We have wearied ourſelves in the way of wickedneſs and deſtruction, we have walked through hard ways, but as for the way of the Lord we have not known it, Wiſd. v. 6, 7. Theſe are to be the perpetual complaints of the damned, this their repentance, this their ſorrow, but all to no purpoſe, for the time of improving is now paſt.

6. The due conſideration of theſe things cannot but excite us to the love of virtue. And therefore St. Chryſoſtom often makes uſe of theſe arguments, in his Homilies, to exhort us to it. In one of them he ſays, "That you may prepare your ſoul in time to be the temple and abode of God, call to mind the dreadful day when we are to appear before the throne of Jeſus Chriſt, to give an account to him of all our actions. Conſider in what manner this Lord will come to judge the living and the dead. Conſider how many thouſands of angels will attend him. Imagine you already hear the ſound of that frightful, but irrevocable ſentence, which Jeſus Chriſt will paſs againſt the world. Conſider, that as ſoon as this ſentence ſhall be given, ſome will be tumbled headlong into outward darkneſs; others, though they have taken a great deal of pains for the preſerving of their virginity, ſhall have the gates of Heaven ſhut upon them; ſome ſhall be tied up like bundles of weeds, and flung into the fire; others again ſhall be delivered up as a prey to the worms which will never die, and condemned to everlaſting wailing and gnaſhing of teeth." We are all of us convinced of the truth of theſe things; why then do not we, whilſt we have time, cry out with the Prophet, *Who will give water to my head and fountains of tears to my eyes, and I will weep day and night?* Jerem. ix. 1. Let us therefore make haſte and endeavour, before it is too late, to prevent the judge by a confeſſion of our ſins, ſince it is written, *Who ſhall confeſs to you, O Lord, in hell,* Pſ. vi. 6.

7. Let us conſider farther, that God has given us two eyes, two ears, two feet and two hands, that if we ſhould happen to loſe the uſe of any one of theſe members, the other may ſtill ſerve us. But he has given us but one ſoul, ſo that if we loſe that, we have no other left us to enjoy eternal glory. Let it therefore be our main concern to preſerve it, for this ſoul muſt one day be ſaved or damned with the body for ever, and muſt appear before the tribunal of our great God, where, if you would excuſe yourſelf, ſaying, you were dazzled with the falſe glittering of money, the judge will anſwer, that he forewarned you of this danger, when he ſaid, *What profit is it to a man, if he ſhould gain the whole world, but loſe his own ſoul?* Mat. xvi. 26. Should you ſay the devil ſeduced me, he will

tell you that Eve did not clear herſelf by ſaying, it was the ſerpent that deceived her, Gen. iii.

8. Look into the ſcriptures, and conſider the Prophet Jeremiah's viſion; firſt he ſaw a watching-rod, and then a great cauldron boiling over a hot fire, to ſignify how God dealt with men. Firſt he threatens, and then if that will not do puniſhes them. Nor is it to be doubted but that he, who will not ſubmit to the correction of the rod, ſhall be made to undergo the torture of the cauldron. Read but the goſpel, and you will ſee that no body offered to intercede for thoſe unhappy wretches whom our Saviour condemned. Brothers did not ſpeak for their brothers, nor friends for their friends; the father did not ſtand up for his ſon, nor the ſon for his father. But what do I ſpeak of theſe who were ſinful men, ſince neither Noah, Daniel or Job, notwithſtanding all their virtue and piety, will be able to alter the ſentence once given by the judge, Ezech. xxvi. See whether any one durſt ſo much as open his mouth in favour of him who was turned away from the wedding-dinner, Mat. xxii. 11, 12, 13. and xxv. 11, 12, 13. See whether any body ever ſpoke one word for that ſervant who would not trade with the talent his maſter intruſted him with. Which of all thoſe five virgins that could not get any admittance into Heaven ever found any one that undertook to plead her cauſe? Jeſus Chriſt himſelf called them fools, for managing themſelves ſo unwiſely as after having deſpiſed the delights of the fleſh and extinguiſhed the fire of concupiſcence, nay, after having obſerved the great precept of virginity, to neglect the commandment of humility, which ſeems to be much eaſier, and to take a pride in their chaſtity. Conſider whether the rich man, who took no pity on Lazarus, could obtain one ſingle drop of water, which he begged of the holy Patriarch Abraham, as poor a comfort as it was, to mitigate thoſe ſcorching flames that ſo tormented him, Luke xvi. Why then will we not charitably aſſiſt one another? why will we not praiſe and glorify God before the ſun of his juſtice is ſet, and before he removes his light from our eyes? We had much better let our tongues be parched up with faſting for the ſhort remainder of this life, than, having ſatisfied them in this world, to let them be reduced to the neceſſity of begging for a drop of water in the next, out of all poſſibility of obtaining it. If we are ſo nice and tender here, that we cannot ſuffer the heat of a light fever the ſpace of three days, how ſhall we able to endure thoſe eternal burnings? If the ſentence of death paſſed upon us by a mortal judge, who cannot take away above forty or fifty years of

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our life at fartheſt, be ſo terrible to us, why do not we tremble at the ſentence that is to be given by a judge, in whoſe power it is to deprive us of life everlaſting? It terrifies us to ſee the puniſhments inflicted on malefactors here upon earth, to ſee the executioners drag them away by force, ſcourge, disjoint, quarter, tear or burn them; and yet what is this but a mere dream or ſhadow, in compariſon of the pains of hell? For death puts an end to all theſe ſufferings, but there the worm of conſcience never dies, there life is never at an end; the tormentors never tired, and the fire never is put out. Let us therefore ſet what we will againſt this miſery, let it be fire or ſword, wild beaſts or any other kind of torment whatſoever, to this it will all appear but as an imperfect draught or repreſentation.

9. What will theſe unhappy wretches do when they ſhall ſee themſelves deprived of ſo many bleſſings, and condemned to ſuffer ſuch unſpeakable miſeries? What will they ſay? How will they cry out againſt themſelves? How horribly will they ſigh and groan, and yet to how little purpoſe? For neither is the ſailor uſeful after he has loſt his veſſel, nor the phyſician when his patient is dead. It is then but too late, alas! They will begin to reflect upon their ſins, and to ſay, we ſhould have looked better to ourſelves, and not have fallen into this deplorable ſtate. Alas! how often have we been told of this, and would take no notice of it? The Jews ſhall then know him who came in the name of the Lord, but it ſhall not avail them, becauſe they would not know him when this knowledge might have been beneficial to them. But what ſhall we miſerable creatures be able to ſay for ourſelves when Heaven and earth, the ſun and moon, night and day, nay, the whole world ſhall cry out againſt us, and be witneſſes of the ſins we have committed: but ſhould every thing elſe be ſilent, we have ſtill our own conſciences to riſe up againſt and accuſe us. This is almoſt all taken out of St. John Chryſoſtom, and is ſufficient to ſhew us how terrible the idea of this dreadful day muſt be to thoſe perſons who have not governed themſelves by the dictates of reaſon and virtue. St. Ambroſe, as ſeverely as he ſearched into all his own actions, gives us plainly to underſtand, in his Commentaries upon St. Luke, that this was his ſentiment; his words are theſe: "Woe be unto me, O Lord, if I do not bewail my ſins; alas! for me, if I do not riſe at midnight to praiſe thy holy name, if I deceive my neighbour, or if I ſpeak againſt the truth, becauſe the axe is now laid to the root of the tree." Let him therefore who is in the ſtate of grace endeavour to bring

bring forth the fruits of juſtice, and let him who is in the ſtate of ſin endeavour to bring forth the fruits of penance. For the Lord is nigh at hand, and come to gather in his fruit, and will give life to thoſe who work faithfully and profitably, and death to them who are idle and unſerviceable.

CHAP. IX.

Of the ninth Motive that obliges us to Virtue, which is Heaven, the third of the four laſt Things.

1. ANY one of theſe conſiderations, we have here propoſed, ſhould ſuffice to perſuade us to the love of virtue. But becauſe the heart of man is ſo ſtubborn, that very often all of them together are not able to prevail upon it, I will here add another motive, no leſs powerful than any of the others; that is, the happineſs and reward promiſed to a good life, which is the poſſeſſion of everlaſting glory, wherein two things particularly occur to be taken notice of; one is the beauty of the place itſelf, which is the imperial Heaven; the other the glory and excellency of the King, who keeps his reſidence there with all his elect.

As for the firſt, though no tongue is able to expreſs the beauty of this place, yet we will endeavour to gueſs at it as well as we can, and to diſcover, as it were, at a diſtance ſome part of it. The firſt thing then to be conſidered is, the end for which God created this excellent frame; for generally the beſt way of knowing the worth of a thing is, to enquire into the deſign of it. Now the deſign of this place is to make known God's glory. For though, as Solomon ſays, *The Lord has made all things for himſelf*, Prov. xvi. 4. It is plain, nevertheleſs, that he particularly made this place for this end, becauſe it is here that he manifeſts the greatneſs and ſplendor of his glory in a more than ordinary manner. Therefore, as the great king Ahaſuerus, Eſther i. who reigned over a hundred and twenty-ſeven provinces, made a ſumptuous feaſt in the city of Suza, the metropolis of his empire, which laſted a hundred and fourſcore days with all the coſt and ſtate imaginable, to let his ſubjects ſee how powerful and how rich he was; ſo this almighty King is pleaſed to make a noble feaſt in Heaven, not for a hundred and fourſcore days only, but for all eternity, to ſhew the infinite immenſity of his riches, his wiſdom, his bounty and his goodneſs. This is the feaſt

Iſaiah

Iſaiah ſpeaks of, when he ſays, *In this mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,* Iſaiah xxv. 6. that is to ſay, of moſt rich and delicious things. If God has prepared this banquet to make the greatneſs of his glory known, we muſt needs imagine that ſince this glory of his is ſo great, the beauty of the place where he reſides is proportionable to it.

2. We ſhall ſtill better underſtand this, if we but examine into the power and riches of the Lord who has choſen it for his reſidence. As to his power, it is ſo great that he created the whole world out of nothing with one word, and with one word can deſtroy it again whenſoever he pleaſes. Nay, it reaches ſo far, that with one ſingle word he could have created, not only one world, but millions of them, and have reduced them to nothing with another. And what is more conſiderable yet, whatſoever he has made has coſt him no pains nor trouble, nor was it any harder to him to create the nobleſt ſeraphim than it was to create the leaſt piſmire, becauſe this infinite power can do whatſoever it has a mind to do, and whatſoever it has a mind to do it does purely by its own will, and is neither tired by the greateſt works nor eaſed by the leaſt. If this Lord is ſo powerful, if the glory of his holy name is ſo great, and if he has ſuch a love for his own glory, how beautiful muſt that place or that banquet conſequently be which he has prepared to ſhew us his glory? What is there wanting towards the perfection of this great work? There can be no want of hands, becauſe the workman is infinitely powerful; no want of ſkill, becauſe he is infinitely wiſe; no want of will, becauſe he is infinitely good; no want of wealth, becauſe he is infinitely rich. If then all things be ſo well diſpoſed to make it great, what muſt that work be, which is performed by the omnipotency of the Father, by the wiſdom of the Son, and by the goodneſs of the Holy Ghoſt? Where goodneſs inclines, wiſdom directs, and omnipotency performs all that an infinite goodneſs deſires and an infinite wiſdom preſcribes, though all theſe things are the ſame in the divine perſons.

3. There is another remarkable thing yet to be conſidered in this matter, which is, that God has prepared this ſtately place, not only for his own honour, but alſo for the glory of all his elect. How ſolicitous God is for them, and for the effecting of all he has promiſed in their behalf, when he ſaid, *Whoſoever ſhall glorify me, I will glorify him,* 1 Kings ii. 30. plainly appears by his actions, ſince he has put every thing in the world under their command, even whilſt they are in this life.

life. How wonderful was it to ſee Joſhua command the ſun to ſtand ſtill in the midſt of its courſe, and to make it ſtop as if he had the direction of the whole world in his power? *God*, as the ſcripture ſays, *obeying the voice of a man*, Joſh. x. 14. How ſtrange was it to ſee the Prophet Iſaiah bid king Ezechias, Iſa. xxxiii. 8, chooſe whether he would have the ſun go back ten degrees upon the dial or forward, for either ſhould be performed? How prodigious is it to ſee the Prophet Elias, 3 Kings xvii. 1. and xviii. 43, &c. lock up the waters and the clouds of Heaven as long as he thought fit; and then command them, by virtue of his word and prayer, to pour down their rain again? Nor is it during their lifetime only that God has given his ſaints ſuch a power; he continues the ſame after their death, and confers it upon their very bones and aſhes, 4 Kings xiii. 21. Who can forbear praiſing God, when he reads of the Prophet Eliſha's bones raiſing a dead man to life, who was accidentally thrown by a band of highwaymen into the Prophet's grave? Who will deny that God beſtows great favours upon his ſaints, when he hears that the ſea opened for three miles together, the day that St. Clement was martyred, that ſo thoſe perſons, who had a mind to go ſee the relics of one that had ſuffered for Chriſt's ſake, might paſs over? God has been pleaſed to inſpire the whole church to inſtitute a feaſt in honour of St. Peter's chains, that we may ſee what an eſteem he has for the bodies of his ſaints, ſince he has commanded us to pay ſuch a ſolemn reſpect to the fetters they wore. But what is all this in compariſon with the honour which God did not only to this Apoſtle's fetters, not only his bones or body, but to his very ſhadow; which, as St. Luke affirms in the Acts, ch. v. 15. cured all perſons of their diſtempers that could come within the reach of it. O God! how infinitely art thou to be admired? O God! how infinitely good art thou, and with what an infinite honour doſt thou reward thy ſaints? Thou haſt given this man what thou never madeſt uſe of thyſelf; for no body ever ſaw Jeſus Chriſt curing the ſick with his ſhadow. Now if it be certain that God has ſuch a love for his ſaints, even at ſuch a time and in ſuch a place too as is deſigned for them to toil and labour in, and not to receive their rewards; how great muſt that glory be which he has prepared to honour them with, and for which he will be honoured and praiſed in them? What may we imagine he, who has ſo great a deſire to glorify them, and who at the ſame time both can and knows beſt how to do whatſoever is capable of contributing to their glory, has prepared and provided for this end.

4. Conſider

4. Conſider farther, how liberal God is in rewarding ſervices done him. He commanded Abraham to ſacrifice his ſon, whom he loved ſo tenderly; and juſt as the Patriarch was upon the point of complying with his command, his Divine goodneſs ſtopped him, and would not let him proceed any farther. *The angel of the Lord ſaid to him, lay not thy hand upon the child, nor do any thing to him: Now I know that thou feareſt God, and thou haſt not ſpared thy only begotten ſon for my ſake. By myſelf have I ſworn, becauſe thou haſt done this thing I will bleſs thee, and will multiply thy ſeed as the ſtars of heaven, and as the ſand which is upon the ſea-ſhore, and thy ſeed ſhall poſſeſs the gates of their enemies; and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed, becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voice,* Gen. xxii. 12, 16, 17, 18. Was not this ſervice well required? It is truly a return that becomes God, who ought to appear like himſelf in all things, as well in the favours he beſtows as in the puniſhments he inflicts.

David began one night to conſider with himſelf, that he had a houſe to dwell in himſelf, and the ark of God had none, and thereupon reſolved to build one for it. But God ſent the Prophet Nathan to him the next morning with this meſſage: *Becauſe thou haſt thought of building me a houſe, I ſwear to thee, that I will build one for thee and thy poſterity, which ſhall remain for ever; and I will give thee a kingdom which ſhall have no end, nor will I ever remove my mercies from it,* 2 Kings vii. 3 Kings viii. 1 Chron. xvii. This was the promiſe God made David; nor did he fail in the performance of it, for the kingdom of Iſrael was governed by princes of the houſe of David, down to the coming of our Saviour, who reigns there now, and there will reign for all eternity. What follows upon this is, that Heaven is nothing elſe but the general reward which God gives his ſaints, for all the ſervices they have done him; and would we but at the ſame time conſider how generous God is in the preſents he makes, we might give ſome kind of gueſs at leaſt at the qualities and conditions of this glory; though it is an abyſs too deep for us to fathom.

5. Another way of paſſing a judgment upon it is, to reflect upon the rate God has thought fit it ſhould be purchaſed at for us. For ſince he has been ſo liberal to us, we muſt not think he would ſet a greater value upon things than they are worth in themſelves. Yet that we might, after we had ſinned, be made partakers of this glory, nothing leſs than the blood and death of his only Son could procure it us. So that God has been pleaſed to die the death of man, that man might live the life of God. God has ſuffered thoſe afflictions and tribulations which were due to man, that ſo man ſhould enjoy the

reſt

reſt and eaſe that belong to God. Nor would man have ever been honoured with a place amongſt the quires of angels, had not God been nailed upon the croſs betwixt two thieves. How great a favour then muſt this be, for the procuring of which a God has ſweated blood, has been taken a priſoner, has been ſcourged, ſpit upon and buffeted; and after all, has been faſtened to a croſs? What can that be which God, who is ſo generous, has prepared to ſell at ſo great a rate? Could a man but fathom this abyſs, he could have no better way of finding out the greatneſs of eternal glory.

But beſides all this, God requires of us as much as poſſibly can be required of man, which is, that we take up our croſs and follow him; that if our right eye offend us, we pluck it out; that we have no concern for father or mother, nor regard any thing in this world, be it what it will, if it be inconſiſtent with whatſoever God ſhall command us. And after we have punctually complied with all he enjoins, he tells us he beſtows this glory gratis. This is what he ſays, in St. John, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; I will give unto him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of life freely*, Rev. xxi. 6. How great a favour muſt this be when God requires ſo much of us for it, and yet when we have given him all we can, he tells us himſelf, he gives it us for nothing? I ſay, *for nothing*, with reſpect to what our actions are worth in themſelves, when ſeparated from the value grace puts on them. Tell me now, if this Lord is ſo liberal in granting of his favours, if he has been ſo good as to beſtow upon every body ſo many ſeveral kinds of benefits even in this life, if every creature, both in Heaven and earth, has been created for man's uſe in general, if he has given the ſinner as well as the juſt, the bad man as well as the good, a free and common poſſeſſion of this world; how ſhall we be able to rate thoſe inexhauſtible riches which he has laid up for none but the juſt? How will he, who has been ſo generous in conferring of his favours upon thoſe who have not deſerved them, reward thoſe to whom his graces are in ſome manner due? How noble muſt he be in requiting ſervices done him, who has been always ſo forward in beſtowing of his mercies? And if he is ſo bountiful in his gifts and preſents, how magnificent will he be in the returns he makes? It is certain we can neither expreſs nor conceive the glory he will beſtow on the grateful, ſince he has here laid ſo many obligations upon the unthankful.

SECTION I.

6. Something of this glory may be farther made out by the ſituation and height of the place deſigned for it, which is not only

only the moſt capacious, but the nobleſt and moſt beautiful of all the reſt. It is called in the ſcripture, *The land of the living*. Whence we are to infer, that the land we now live in is the land of the dying. If therefore it is certain there are ſo many excellent and curious things in this country of the dying, what muſt there be where thoſe perſons reſide who are to live for ever? Look about in every quarter of the world, and conſider how many beautiful objects there are in it. Obſerve the greatneſs of the Heavens, the brightneſs of the ſun, moon and ſtars, the beauteouſneſs of the earth and of the trees, of birds and other creatures. Conſider how pleaſant the plain and open fields are, how delightful the mountains with their unevenneſs, the vallies with their greenneſs, and how the ſprings and rivers which are diſperſed and ſcattered like ſo many veins throughout the whole body of the earth, contribute with their freſhneſs to its beauty. Reflect upon the vaſt extent of the ſeas, which have ſuch a great variety of wonders in them. What are the lakes and pools of pure water, but, as it were, the eyes of the earth or the mirrors of the Heavens? or what can we think of the verdant meadows, interwoven with roſes and other flowers, but that they reſemble the firmament all beſpangled with ſtars in a clear night? What ſhall we ſay of the mines of gold and ſilver, and other rich metals, of rubies, emeralds, diamonds and other precious ſtones, which ſeem to ſtand in competition with the ſtars themſelves for a glittering luſtre and beauty? What ſhall we ſay of that variety of colours which is to be ſeen in birds, in beaſts, in flowers, and in an infinite number of other wonderful objects? Beſides all this, art has added to the perfections of nature, and ſo improved the beauty of all things. Hence come thoſe works which are ſo pleaſing to the eye, glittering with gold and precious ſtones, noble paintings, delightful gardens, royal garments, ſtately ſtructures adorned with gold and marble, and innumerable things of other ſorts. If then there are ſo many and ſuch delights in this, which is the loweſt of all the elements and the land of the dying, what muſt there be in that ſublime place which as far exceeds all the other Heavens and elements in riches, honour, beauty, and all kinds of perfections, as it does in height? If we conſider how much thoſe beauties of the Heavens which are viſible to our eyes, as the ſun, moon and ſtars ſurpaſs thoſe of this lower world in brightneſs, in power, in form and in duration, how glorious muſt we imagine thoſe of the next world to be, which are only to be ſeen with immortal eyes? All we are able to conceive or think will come infinitely ſhort of them.

7. We

7. We know man muſt have three different places of habitation, anſwering to the three different ſtates of life. His firſt place of habitation is his mother's womb after his conception; his ſecond is the world he lives in after his birth; his third is Heaven, where he is placed after his death, if he has lived a good life. Theſe three ſeveral places bear ſome ſort of proportion to one another, ſo that the third has in an infinite degree all thoſe advantages over the ſecond, which the ſecond has over the firſt, as well in duration, greatneſs and beauty, as in all other qualities whatſoever. As to the duration it is viſible, for the length of life in the firſt place is nine months, in the ſecond it ſometimes extends to an hundred years, but in the third it laſts for all eternity. The ſame is to be ſaid of the largeneſs of the firſt place, which has no greater an extent than that of a woman's womb, the ſecond is no narrower than the whole world itſelf, and as for the greatneſs of the third, the beſt rule we have whereby to judge of it is, the wide diſproportion which is between the firſt and the ſecond place; nor does is it leſs excel thoſe other places in beauty, riches and all other perfections and accompliſhments, moſt proper to recommend it to us, than it does in extent and duration. If therefore this world of ours be ſo great and glorious as we have repreſented it, and if notwithſtanding the other we have been ſpeaking of be as far above it, as we have ſaid it is, how charming muſt its beauty be, and how vaſt and ſpacious its extent? This we may diſcover by the great difference there is betwixt the inhabitants of both places, becauſe the ſtatelineſs of a building ſhould hold a proportion with the quality of the perſon that is to live in it. We are to conſider then, that the place we live in is the land of the dying, the other of the living; the one is the habitation of ſinners, the other of ſaints; the one is the dwelling-place of men, the other of angels; the one is a place for penitents, the other for thoſe who are juſtified; the one is the field of battle, the other the city of triumph. In the one, to conclude, there are enemies as well as friends, whilſt there are none but friends in the other, and thoſe no other but the *elect* themſelves. The ſame difference that is between the inhabitants of theſe two places is betwixt the places themſelves. For God has created all places ſuitable to the quality of the perſons they are deſigned for. *Glorious things are ſpoken of thee city of God*, Pſ lxxxvi. 3. Thou art unmeaſurable in thy extent, and moſt ſtately in thy ſtructure. The matter which thou art made of is moſt precious, the people that live in thee are moſt noble, all thy employments are delightful,

delightful, all ſorts of goods abound in thee, nor is there any kind of miſery whatſoever which thou art not entirely free and ſecure from. Thou art very great in every thing, becauſe he who made thee is very great, becauſe the end which he deſigned thee for is very noble, and becauſe thoſe citizens for whoſe ſake he has created thee are the moſt honourable of all mankind.

SECTION II.

8. All we have hitherto ſaid relates only to the accidental glory of the ſaints, beſide which there is another ſort called the eſſential glory, infinitely beyond the accidental. This eſſential glory conſiſts in ſeeing and enjoying God himſelf, which St. Auguſtine ſpeaks of, when he ſays, "that virtue ſhall be rewarded with no leſs a price than with God himſelf, the giver of all earthly virtue, whom we ſhall ſee for all eternity, whom we ſhall love without ever being cloyed, and whom we ſhall praiſe without ever giving over." So that this is the greateſt reward we can receive; for it is neither Heaven nor earth, nor ſea, nor any created being whatſoever, but it is God himſelf, who, notwithſtanding his being free from all kind of mixture, contains within himſelf all that is good and perfect. For the underſtanding of this point you muſt conceive, that one of the greateſt myſteries in this Divine ſubſtance is, that it comprehends within itſelf, in an infinitely eminent degree, the perfections of all the creatures, though at the ſame time it is a moſt pure Being; becauſe God having created them all and directed them to their laſt end, he muſt of neceſſity poſſeſs what he gives to others. Whence it follows, that the bleſſed ſhall enjoy and behold all things in him, each in proportion to the glory he ſhall be partaker of. For as the creatures ſerve us now inſtead of a mirror in which we may behold ſome part of God's beauty, ſo God himſelf will, at that time, be the glaſs wherein we ſhall ſee the beauty of the creatures, but in a much more perfect manner than if we ſaw them in themſelves. Thus God will be the univerſal happineſs of all the ſaints, he will be their complete felicity and the accompliſhment of all their deſires; he will then be a mirror to our eyes, muſic to our ears, ſweetneſs to our taſte, and a moſt pleaſant perfume to our noſtrils. In him we ſhall behold all the variety of the ſeveral times and ſeaſons of the year, the freſhneſs of the ſpring, the clearneſs of the ſummer, the plenty of the autumn, and the repoſe of winter. There is nothing in ſhort that can pleaſe all the ſenſes of our bodies or the faculties of our ſouls, which

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we ſhall not meet with in him. "It is in him," ſays St. Bernard, "we ſhall find the fulneſs of light for our underſtanding, the abundance of peace for our wills, and the continuation of eternity for our memories." There the wiſdom of Solomon will appear but folly, the beauty of Abſalom deformity, the ſtrength of Samſon weakneſs, the long lives of the old patriarchs a ſhort mortality, and the riches of all the kings of the earth mere poverty and want.

9. If, as moſt certainly it is, all this be true, why do you ſtay to look for ſtraws in Egypt, and to drink muddy water in filthy puddles, when you ſhould be going on toward this ſpring-head of happineſs, this fountain of living waters? Why do you beg by parcels what you may find heaped up together, and more abundantly in this great all? If you aim at pleaſures, raiſe up your heart, and conſider how delightful this good muſt be which contains in itſelf all goods and pleaſures. If you are in love with this created life, how much greater ſatisfaction will you take in that life which has created every thing? If the health you enjoy be a pleaſure to you, how much more will you be pleaſed with him who is himſelf the author of health? If you are taken with the knowledge of the creatures, how much more will you be with that of the Creator? If beauty charms you, he it is whoſe beauty the ſun and moon admire. If nobility be what you ſeek after, he is the very ſource and original of all that is noble; if you wiſh for long life, he is life everlaſting; if plenty be your deſire, he is the fulneſs of all riches; if you love muſic and charming voices, the angels are continually ſinging in his preſence; if you hunt after company and converſation, you will there have the company of all the bleſſed, who have but one heart and one ſoul. If you aim at honourable employs and covet riches, they are both to be found in the houſe of God; if, in fine, you would be freed from all kinds of miſeries and ſufferings, it is there you will be happily delivered from them, and that for ever. God commanded his people in the old law to circumciſe their children on the eighth day, giving us thereby to underſtand that upon the eighth day, that is the day of the general reſurrection which is to follow the week of this life, he will circumciſe and cut off all the miſeries of thoſe perſons who ſhall have circumciſed themſelves, and have put a ſtop to all their inordinate deſires, who ſhall have retrenched all their ſuperfluities and have overcome their failings for his ſake. What can be happier than ſuch a life as this, which is free from all miſery and trouble, and which, as St. Auguſtine ſays, ſhall never be expoſed

poſed to any fear or poverty, indiſpoſition or ſickneſs, where there never ſhall be any anger or envy, where we ſhall never ſtand in need of eating and drinking, never covet worldly preferments and honours, never be afraid of devils, never dread the pains of hell nor apprehend the death, either of the body or of the ſoul; for we ſhall live there with all manner of content and ſatisfaction, enjoying the delights of immortality, which ſhall never be interrupted or diſturbed with diviſion and factions; for there all things are in a perfect and perpetual peace and concord.

10. To all theſe advantages muſt be added, that of living in the company of angels, of enjoying the converſation of all thoſe ſublime ſpirits, and of ſeeing thoſe noble troops of ſaints, who are more bright and glorious than the ſtars of Heaven. There the patriarchs ſhall appear with glory for their perfect obedience, and the prophets for their lively hope; there you ſhall behold the martyrs adorned with crowns, dyed in their own blood, and the virgins cloathed in white robes, in token of their chaſtity. But what tongue ſhall be able to expreſs the majeſty of the ſovereign Monarch who reſides in the midſt of them all? Were we every day to ſuffer freſh torments, nay, ſhould we undergo for ſome time the pains of hell itſelf, that we might ſee the Lord in his glory and enjoy the happy company of his elect, it would certainly be worth our while to endure all this, that we might arrive at ſuch a height of happineſs. Thus far St. Auguſtine.

If therefore this be ſo great a bleſſing, how happy ſhall thoſe eyes be that are to be always fixed upon theſe objects? What a happineſs muſt it be to ſee this ſtately city, to behold theſe honourable citizens in all their glory, to have a ſight of the face of this Creator, the magnificence of theſe buildings, the riches of theſe places, and the common joy of this heavenly country? What muſt it be to behold all the orders of theſe bleſſed ſpirits, the authority of this ſacred ſenate and the majeſty of thoſe venerable elders, whom St. John ſaw ſitting upon thrones in the preſence of God? Revel. iv. 4. What a pleaſure muſt it be to hear theſe angelic voices, theſe charming ſingers, and this harmonious muſic, not in four parts as ours here is, but in as many parts and of as many different voices as there are bleſſed ſouls in Heaven? How ſhall we be charmed when we hear them ſing this moſt raviſhing ſong, which the ſame St. John once heard: *Bleſſing and glory, and wiſdom and thankſgiving, and honour and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* ch. vii. 12. And if it be ſo

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pleaſant a thing to hear the harmony theſe voices ſhall make, how much more delightful muſt it be to ſee the unity and concord of thoſe unanimous ſouls and bodies? to obſerve what a union there will be between men and angels, but more particularly betwixt man and God? What a happineſs ſhall it be to ſee theſe fine fields, theſe fountains of life, and theſe paſtures upon the mountains of Iſrael? Ezek. xxxiv. 14. What a glorious thing will it be to ſit down at this ſumptuous table, to have a place amongſt the gueſts, to eat out of the ſame diſh with Jeſus Chriſt, that is, to ſhare with him in his glory? There the bleſſed ſhall be at reſt and have a full enjoyment of eternal bliſs. It is there that they ſhall ſing and praiſe, and be perpetually entertained with the moſt delicious banquets. Since therefore faith tells us, that ſuch great bleſſings as theſe are the rewards of virtue, can any man ſtand ſo much in his own light as not to reſolve upon an immediate purſuit after it, in hope of ſo large a recompence?

CHAP. X.

Of the tenth Motive that obliges us to the Love of Virtue, which is the fourth of the four laſt Things, viz. *the Pains of Hell.*

1. ANY the leaſt part of this great reward, we have now ſpoken of, ſhould be more than ſufficient to inflame our hearts with the love of virtue. But if, to the fulneſs of that glory which is reſerved for the juſt, we farther add the ſeverity of thoſe torments that are prepared for the wicked, what an effect muſt this have upon us, eſpecially there being no middle ſtate betwixt theſe two? The wicked man cannot comfort himſelf by ſaying, 'All that can come of my living wickedly is, that I ſhall never enjoy God; as for the reſt, I expect neither happineſs nor miſery.' The ſinful man ſhall not eſcape thus. One of theſe two oppoſite conditions muſt be his lot, he muſt either reign with God for all eternity, or burn for ever with the devils in hell. Theſe are the two baſkets the Lord in a viſion ſhewed the prophet Jeremiah, before the gates of the temple, Jerem. xxiv. 1, 2. one of which had very good figs, and the other very naughty ones, which could not be eaten they were ſo bad. God's deſign was by this to let his Prophet know, that there were two ſorts of perſons, the one the object of his mercy, the other of his juſtice. The

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firſt cannot be in a more happy condition, nor the latter in a more miſerable, becauſe the happineſs of the firſt conſiſts in ſeeing God, the perfection of all goodneſs, whilſt the miſery of the others is to be deprived of his ſight, the greateſt misfortune that can poſſibly befall poor man.

This truth, well conſidered, would make thoſe men who ſin ſo unconcernedly ſenſible what a weight they voluntarily lay upon themſelves. Thoſe who get their living by carrying of burdens obſerve firſt what they have to carry, and lift it up a little to ſee if it is not too heavy for them. And will you, who are brought up amidſt the delights and charms of ſin, let your ſenſual deſires draw you away ſo far, in oppoſition to the will of God, as to oblige you to carry the heavy burden of ſin, without any hope of eaſe or reſt, and all this for the enjoyment of a baſe, infamous pleaſure? Try firſt its weight, that is, conſider the puniſhment attending it, that you may ſee whether you are able to bear it. That you may the better conceive how painful this torment is, and how weighty a burthen you lay on your ſhoulders, as often as you ſin, I will propoſe to you the following conſiderations: And though I have handled this matter elſewhere, yet I cannot paſs it over without ſaying ſomething upon it again in this place, though quite different from what I have ſaid before; for, the ſubject is ſo copious, there is no wearing of it thread-bare.

2. Conſider firſt the immenſe greatneſs of God who is to puniſh ſin. He is God in all his works, that is, great and wonderful in them all, not only in Heaven, earth and ſea, but even in hell and all other places. Now if this Lord is God, and ſhews himſelf God in all his actions, he will certainly appear ſo no leſs in his wrath, in his juſtice, and in the puniſhment he inflicts on ſin. This is what he means, when he ſays, by the Prophet Jeremiah, *Fear ye not me? Will ye not tremble at my preſence, who have placed the ſand for the bound of the ſea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot paſs it, and though the waves toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not paſs over it?* Jerem. v. 22. As if he had ſaid more plainly, is it not highly requiſite that ye ſhould fear the ſtrength of that arm which has wrought ſo great a miracle? which will be neither leſs powerful nor leſs wonderful in the puniſhment it inflicts, than in all its other works. So that we have as much reaſon to fear him infinitely, upon the account of the miſeries he can reduce us to, as we have to praiſe him for the favours he has beſtowed upon us. It was this that made the ſame Prophet, though innocent and ſanctified in his mother's

womb, to tremble, when he ſaid, *Who will not fear thee, O King of nations, for glory appertains to thee?* Jer. x. 7. And in another place, *I ſate alone, becauſe of thy hand; for thou haſt filled me with commination*, ch. xv. 17. The holy Prophet knew very well that theſe threats did not touch him; yet for all this, they were ſo dreadful as to make him tremble. Therefore it is with reaſon we ſay, the pillars of Heaven ſhake before the majeſty of God, and the powers and principalities all tremble in his preſence; not that they are in doubt of their own happineſs, but becauſe they are in continual admiration of his infinite Majeſty. If theſe pure ſpirits are not free from fear, what apprehenſion ſhould ſinners and ſuch as deſpiſe God's commandments be in, as being the perſons upon whom he will thunder out the dreadful effects of his vengeance? This is without doubt one of the chief reaſons which ought to ſtir up in our ſouls a fear of this puniſhment, as St. John plainly ſhews us in his Revelation, ch. xviii. 8. where, ſpeaking of the puniſhments which God will inflict, he ſays, *Babylon's plagues ſhall come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire; for ſtrong is the Lord God who judgeth her.* And St. Paul, who very well knew his great ſtrength, ſays, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. It is no dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, becauſe they are not ſo ſtrong but that a man may break from them, nor have they power enough to thruſt a ſoul headlong into hell. Our Saviour for this reaſon ſaid to his diſciples, *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Fear him who, after he has killed, hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him*, Luke xii. 4, 5. Theſe are the hands the Apoſtle ſays it is a terrible thing to fall into. Thoſe perſons were ſurely very ſenſible of the force of theſe hands, who cried out, in the book of Eccleſiaſticus, ch. ii. 22. *Unleſs we do penance we ſhall fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men.* All this plainly makes it appear, that as God is great in his power, in his authority, and in all his works, ſo will he be in his anger, in his juſtice, and in puniſhing of the wicked.

3. This will be ſtill more evident, if we do but conſider the greatneſs of the Divine juſtice which inflicts this puniſhment, and we may ſee more of it in thoſe dreadful examples we have in the holy ſcriptures. How remarkably did God puniſh Dathan and Abiram, Numb. xvi. with all their accomplices, by making the earth open to ſwallow them alive, and by ſinking them down into hell, for rebelling againſt their ſuperiors? Who has

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ever heard of any threats or curſes like thoſe that are to be read in Deuteronomy, againſt the tranſgreſſors of the law? Theſe are ſome of thoſe many dreadful comminations. *I will ſend armies of enemies againſt you*, ſays God, *which ſhall beſiege your cities, and ſhall bring you into ſuch ſtreights, that the tender and delicate woman among you, which would not venture to ſet the ſole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateneſs and tenderneſs, ſhall devour the after-birth with the blood, and the reſt of the uncleanneſs that flows from her. She ſhall eat them, for want of all things, ſecretly in the ſiege* Deut. xxviii. 50, 52, 55, 56, 57. Theſe are indeed moſt terrible puniſhments; and yet neither are theſe nor any others whatſoever, that man can ſuffer in this life, any more than a mere ſhadow or a faint reſemblance, in compariſon of thoſe which are reſerved for the next. Then will be the time that the Divine juſtice ſhall ſignalize itſelf againſt thoſe who have here deſpiſed his mercy. If therefore the ſhadow and the reſemblance be ſo frightful, what ſhall we think of the ſubſtance and original? And if the chalice of the Lord be ſo unpalatable now, when there is water mixed with it, and when the ſeverity of juſtice is leſſened ſo much by the mildneſs of mercy, how bitter muſt the potion be when we ſhall be forced to drink it off, without any mixture at all, and when thoſe perſons who would not accept of God's mercy ſhall feel nothing but the effects of his judgments? And yet theſe torments, though ſo great, are all infinitely leſs than what our ſins deſerve.

4. Beſides the conſideration of the greatneſs of God's juſtice, another way to make us underſtand the rigour of theſe puniſhments he will inflict is, to reflect on the effects of his mercy, which ſinners ſo much preſume upon. For what greater ſubject of aſtoniſhment can we have than to ſee a God taking human fleſh upon him, and ſuffering in his body all the torments and diſgraces which he underwent, even to the dying upon the croſs? What greater mercy could he ſhew than thus to humble himſelf, to carry the burthen of all our ſins, that he might thereby eaſe us of the weight of them, and to offer up his moſt precious blood for the ſalvation of thoſe very wretches who ſhed it? Now, as the works of the Divine mercy are wonderful in themſelves, ſo will the effects of God's juſtice be. For ſince God is equal in all his attributes, becauſe all that is in him is God, it follows that his juſtice is no leſs in itſelf than his mercy is, and as by the thickneſs of one arm we may judge how big the other is, ſo we may know how

great the arm of God's juſtice is by that of his mercy, ſince they are both equal.

If God, when he was pleaſed to make known his mercy to the world, performed ſuch wonderful and almoſt incredible things, that the ſame world looked upon them as folly, what do you think he will do at his ſecond coming, which is the time deſigned for manifeſting the ſeverity of his juſtice? Eſpecially ſince every ſin that is committed in the world gives him a new occaſion to exerciſe it; whereas he never had any motive to mercy but that ſame mercy itſelf; there being nothing at all in human nature that deſerves his favour; but as for his juſtice, he will have as many reaſons to execute the utmoſt rigour of it as there have been crimes committed by mankind. Judge by that how terrible it muſt be.

5. St. Bernard, in one of his ſermons upon the coming of our Saviour, has explained this very well, in theſe words: "As our Lord, at his firſt coming into the world, ſhewed himſelf very merciful and eaſy in forgiving, ſo at his ſecond he will ſhew himſelf as rigid and ſevere in puniſhing; and as there is no body but may be reconciled to his favour now, it will be impoſſible for any one to obtain it then; becauſe he is as infinite in his juſtice as he is in his mercy, and can puniſh with as much rigour, as he pardons with mildneſs. His mercy, it is true, has the firſt place, provided our behaviour has not been ſuch as may provoke the ſeverity of his juſtice." Theſe words give us to underſtand, that the greatneſs of God's mercy is the ſtandard we may go by to gueſs at his juſtice. The ſame doctrine is held forth to us by the royal Prophet, ſaying, *Our God is the God from whom cometh ſalvation; God is the Lord by whom we eſcape death. God ſhall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of ſuch a one as goeth on ſtill in his wickedneſs*, Pſ. lxviii. 20, 21. This ſhews how kind and merciful God is to thoſe who return to him, and how ſevere againſt hardened and obſtinate ſinners.

6. Another proof of this we have in the extraordinary patience with which God bears, not only with the whole world in general, but with every ſinner in particular. How many do we daily ſee who, from the very firſt moment they came to the uſe of reaſon till their latter days, have been employed in nothing but ſin without ever regarding God's promiſes or his threats, his mercies or his commands, or any other thing that tended to their converſion? And yet this ſovereign goodneſs has been all the while expecting them with patience, without cutting off one minute of their unhappy lives, and has

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not ceaſed to make uſe of ſeveral means to bring them to repentance, but all to no purpoſe. What therefore will he do, when, after having exhauſted this long patience, his anger, which has been for ſo long a time gathering in the repoſitory of his juſtice, ſhall overflow the banks which kept it in? With how much force and violence will it ruſh in upon them? This is what the Apoſtle meant, when he ſaid, *Doſt thou not know, O man, that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? But thou, after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds*, Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6.

What can he mean by, *treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath*, but that as they who hoard up riches, daily heap gold upon gold, and ſilver upon ſilver, for the encreaſing of their ſtock, ſo God daily adds to the treaſure of his anger, in proportion to the number of the ſinner's crimes? Were a man to be altogether employed for fifty or ſixty years together in heaping of treaſure, ſo as not to let one day or hour paſs without making ſome addition to it, what a mighty ſum would he find at the end of this time? How miſerable then muſt your condition be, ſince you ſcarce ſuffer one moment of your life to ſlip without adding ſomething to the treaſure of God's wrath, which is every minute increaſed by the number of your ſins? For though nothing elſe were to be put in but the immodeſt caſts of your eyes, the malice and the vicious deſires of your heart, and the oaths and ſcandalous words that come from your mouth, theſe alone would ſuffice to fill a whole world. Then, if ſo many other enormous crimes as you are daily guilty of be added to theſe, what a treaſure of wrath and vengeance ſhall you have heaped againſt yourſelf at the end of ſo many years?

7. If beſides all this we make a ſerious reflection upon the ingratitude and malice of the wicked, it will in a great meaſure ſhew us with what ſeverity and rigour this puniſhment is to be inflicted. To paſs a true judgment upon this matter we ſhould conſider, on one ſide, how merciful God has dealt with men, what he did and ſaid for them whilſt he was here upon earth, and how much he ſuffered for them, what diſpoſitions and means he has found for their leading a virtuous life, how much he has pardoned or ſeemed not to take notice of, the benefits he has done them, the evils he has delivered them from, with infinite other graces he is always beſtowing upon them. Let us conſider, on the other ſide, how forgetful men have been of God, their ingratitude, their treaſons,

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their infidelities, their blaſphemies, the contempt they have had both of him and of his commandments, which has been carried ſo far, that they have trampled them under foot, not only for a trivial intereſt, but very often for nothing and out of mere malice; nay, they are come to ſuch a degree of impudence, that the laws of God are the frequent matter of their pleaſantry, ridicule and drollery. What do you think thoſe perſons who have deſpiſed ſo high a majeſty, thoſe who, as the Apoſtle ſays, Heb x. 29. *have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified and an unholy thing*, can expect, but to be puniſhed and tormented in that day, wherein they muſt render an account of themſelves, according to the affronts and injuries they have offered? For God, being a moſt equitable judge, that is to ſay, ſuch a one as will puniſh the offender proportionably to the offence given, and being beſides the party offended, how great muſt the torments be which the body and ſoul of the criminal delivered up to his juſtice ſhall ſuffer, ſince they are to equal the grievouſneſs of the crimes by which the Divine majeſty has been affronted? And if it was neceſſary that the Son of God ſhould ſhed his blood to ſatisfy for thoſe ſins which had been committed againſt him, the merits of the perſon ſupplying what might be wanting to the rigour of the puniſhment, what muſt follow when this ſatisfaction is to be made by no other way but by the ſeverity of the puniſhment, without any conſideration of the perſon at all?

8. If, as we have ſeen, the quality of the judge ought to make us ſo much afraid, what ſhould that of the executioner do? For the ſentence which God ſhall paſs againſt a ſoul is to be put into execution by the devil, and what favour can be expected from ſo cruel an enemy? That you may conceive ſomething of his fury and malice, conſider how he dealt with holy Job, when God had delivered him into his power. What cruelty and violence did he not exerciſe upon this righteous man, without the leaſt ſhew of tenderneſs or pity? He ſent the Sabeans to drive away his oxen and aſſes, his ſheep and his ſervants he deſtroyed by fire; he overthrew all his houſes, he killed his children, he covered his body all over with ſores and ulcers, leaving him no part of thoſe vaſt riches he poſſeſſed before but a dunghill to ſit on, and a tile to ſcrape off the corruption that ran from his ſores. And to add to his ſorrow, he left him a wicked wife and ſuch friends, as it had been more humanity to deſtroy than ſpare. For they, with their tongues, pierced and tormented his heart more cruelly than

than the worms that preyed upon his fleſh. Thus he behaved himſelf towards Job. But what was it he did, or rather what was it he left undone againſt the Saviour of the world, in that dreadful night when he was delivered up to the power of darkneſs? It is more than can be compromiſed in a few words. If then this enemy of mankind, and all his accomplices, are ſo inhuman, ſo bloody, ſuch enemies to mankind and ſo powerful to do harm, what will become of you, miſerable creature, when you ſhall be delivered up into their hands, with a full and abſolute authority to execute upon you all the cruelties they ſhall be able to invent? And this not for a day or for a night, nor for a year only or for an age, but for all eternity. Do you think theſe mercileſs devils, when they have you in their clutches, will uſe you kindly? O! how dark and diſmal will that unhappy day be, when you ſhall be delivered up to the power of theſe ravenous wolves, theſe ſavage beaſts!

9. But that you may the better conceive what uſage is to be expected at their hands, I will here ſet down a notable example, out of St. Gregory's Dialogues, L. 4. c. 33. He tells us, "that there was a religious man in one of his monaſteries, no riper in virtue than in years, who was ready to die of a very violent ſickneſs. The brothers being all met together, according to their cuſtom, to aſſiſt him in this his dangerous paſſage, and kneeling about his bed to pray for him, the dying man cried out to them, 'Begone, begone, fathers, and leave me a prey to this dragon, that he may ſwallow me up, for my head is already in his fiery jaws, and he preſſes me with his ſcales, which are like the teeth of a ſaw, ſo that I am in a moſt inſupportable torment. I deſire you therefore to go out of the room, and leave me to him, for not being able to make an end of me whilſt you are here, he puts me to ſo much greater pain.' The religious adviſed him to take courage and make the ſign of the croſs: 'How ſhall I do it,' ſays he, 'when the dragon has ſo twiſted his tail about my hands and feet, that I am not able to ſtir?' They, not at all diſheartened at this, renewed their prayers with much greater fervour than before, and ſeconding them with ſighs and tears, obtained of the Father of mercies his deliverance from this violent agony, which left him ſo aſtoniſhed and confounded, that he afterwards lived ſuch a virtuous life as to put him out of all danger of ſeeing himſelf reduced to ſuch circumſtances again."

10. Theſe are the wicked ſpirits which St. John deſcribes, in his Revelation, under the moſt frightful forms we are able to conceive. *I ſaw*, ſays he, *a ſtar fall from Heaven unto the earth*,

earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit. And he opened the bottomleſs pit, and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit as the ſmoke of a great furnace, and the ſun and the air were darkened by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit. And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth, and unto them was given power as the ſcorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they ſhould not kill them, but that they ſhould be tormented five months, and their torments was as the torment of a ſcorpion when he ſtrikes a man. And in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek death and ſhall not find it, and ſhall deſire to die and death ſhall flee from them. And the ſhapes of the locuſts were like unto horſes prepared unto battle, and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breaſt-plates, as it were, breaſt-plates of iron, and the ſound of their wings was as the ſound of chariots of many horſes running to battle. And they had tails like unto ſcorpions, and there were ſtings in their tails, Rev. ix. 1,—10. Thus far are the words of St. John. Now what was the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in ſhewing us the greatneſs of theſe torments under ſuch terrible repreſentations and figures? What other deſign could he have, but to let us know by theſe dreadful forms how great the wrath of the Lord will be, what the inſtruments of his juſtice, what puniſhments are to fall upon ſinners, and what power our enemies are like to have, that the dread of theſe things might deter us from offending God? For what ſtar was it that fell from Heaven and had the key of the bottomleſs pit delivered to it, but that bright angel who was flung headlong out of Heaven into hell, and to whoſe power the kingdom of darkneſs was committed? And what were theſe locuſts, ſo fierce and ſo well armed, but the devils, his accomplices and the miniſters of his rage? What were theſe green things which they were commanded not to hurt, but the juſt, who flouriſh by being watered with the heavenly dew of grace, and thus bring forth the fruits of eternal life? Who are thoſe that have not the ſeal of God ſtamped upon them, but ſuch as are deſtitute of his ſpirit, the true and infallible mark of his ſervants and of the innocent ſheep of his flock? It is againſt theſe unhappy wretches the Divine juſtice has raiſed ſuch forces, that they may be tormented, both in this life and in the next, by thoſe very devils, whoſe ſervice they have preferred before that of their Creator,

as the Egyptians once were by the flies and gnats which they adored. Add to all this, how dreadful it will be to behold in this ſad place thoſe hideous and frightful monſters, this devouring dragon, and this writhing ſerpent. What a horrible ſight muſt it be to ſee this huge and monſtrous Behemoth, which is ſaid, in the book of Job, to erect his tail like a cedar, to drink up whole rivers, and to devour mountains.

11. A thorough conſideration of all theſe things is ſufficient to make us underſtand what torments the wicked are to ſuffer. For who can imagine, from what has been ſaid, but that theſe pains muſt be very great? What can a man expect from the greatneſs of God himſelf, from the greatneſs of his juſtice in puniſhing ſin, from the greatneſs of his patience to bear with ſinners, from the infinite multitude of favours and graces by which he has endeavoured to invite and draw them to himſelf, from the greatneſs of the hatred he bears to ſin, which deſerves to be infinitely hated, becauſe it offends an infinite majeſty, and from the greatneſs of our enemies cruelty and fury? What can we, I ſay, expect from all theſe things which are ſo great, but that ſin ſhould meet with a moſt ſevere and terrible puniſhment? If therefore ſo ſevere a puniſhment is ordained for ſin, and no doubt can be made of it ſince faith teſtifies this truth, how can they who pretend to own and believe it be ſo inſenſible of the heavy weight every ſin they commit throws upon them, when, by giving way to but one offence, they bring themſelves into the danger of incurring a penalty which on ſo many accounts appears to be ſo terrible.

SECTION.

Of the Duration of theſe Torments.

12. But though all theſe conſiderations are ſufficient, without any farther addition, to make us tremble, we ſhall have much more reaſon to be afraid if we do but reflect with ourſelves upon the duration of the pains we have now ſpoken of. For if after ſeveral thouſands of years there ſhould be any limit ſet or any eaſe given to theſe ſufferings, it would be ſome kind of comfort to the wicked: But what ſhall I ſay of their eternity which has no bounds, but will laſt as long as God himſelf. This eternity is ſuch, that, as a great doctor tells us, ſhould one of the damned, at the end of every thouſand years, ſhed but one tear, he would ſooner overflow the world than find any end to his miſeries. Can any thing then be more terrible? This is certainly ſo great an evil, that though all the pains

pains of hell were no ſharper than the prick of a pin, conſidering they were to continue for ever, man ought to undergo all the torments of this world to avoid them. O! that this eternity, this terrible word *for ever*, were deeply imprinted in your heart, how great would be the benefit you would reap by it? We read of a certain vain and worldly minded man, who, conſidering ſeriouſly one day upon this eternity of torments, was frightened with the duration of them into this reflection:—No man in the world in his right ſenſes would be confined to a bed of roſes and violets for the ſpace of thirty or forty years, though he were at this price to purchaſe the empire of the whole earth. If ſo, ſaid he to himſelf, what a madman muſt he be that will, for things of much leſs value, run the hazard of lying infinite ages upon a bed of fire and flames? This thought alone wrought him up to ſuch and ſo immediate a change of life, that he became a great ſaint and a worthy prelate of the church. What will thoſe nice and effeminate perſons ſay to this, whoſe whole night's ſleep is diſturbed and broken if a fly be but buzzing in their chamber? What will they ſay when they ſhall be ſtretched out upon a bed of fire, and ſurrounded on all ſides with ſulphurous flames, not for one ſhort ſummer's night, but for all eternity. Theſe are the perſons to whom the Prophet Iſaiah, ch. xxxiii. 14. put this queſtion: *Who among you can dwell with the devouring fire? Who amongſt you can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Who can be able to bear ſuch a ſcorching heat as this for ſo long a time? O fooliſh and ſenſeleſs men, lulled into a lethargic ſleep by the charms of this old deceiver of mankind! Can any thing be more unreaſonable than to ſee men ſo buſily providing for this mortal and corruptible life, and at the ſame time to have no greater concern for the things which regard eternity? If we are blind to this miſtake, what will our eyes be open to? What ſhall we be afraid of, if we have no apprehenſion of this miſery? or what ſhall we ever provide againſt, if not againſt a matter of ſuch importance?

13. Since all this is ſo undeniably true, why will we not reſolve to walk in the way of virtue, though ever ſo troubleſome, that we may avoid thoſe puniſhments we are threatened with, if we take the contrary way? Should God leave it to any man's choice, either to be tormented with the gout or tooth-ach in ſuch a violent manner, as not to have any hopes of eaſe either day or night, or elſe to turn Carthuſian or bare-foot Carmelite, and undergo all the auſterities thoſe religious men are obliged to, it is not to be imagined any man would

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be ſo ſtupid as not to chuſe either of theſe two ſtates, though upon the bare motive of ſelf-love, rather than ſuffer ſuch a torture for ſo long a time. Why then do not we accept of ſo eaſy a penance to avoid ſuch a laſting torment, ſince the pains of hell are ſo much more inſufferable, of ſo much longer continuance, and God requires ſo much leſs of us than the life of a Carthuſian or Carmelite? Why do we refuſe to undergo ſuch a little trouble, when by it we may eſcape ſo long and ſo rigorous a puniſhment? Can any man be guilty of a greater folly than this is? But the puniſhment of it ſhall be that, ſince man would not, by ſhort penance done here, redeem himſelf from ſo much miſery, he ſhall do penance in hell for all eternity, without reaping any benefit by it. The fiery furnace which Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be kindled in Babylon is a type hereof, Dan. iii. 47. for though the flames mount forty-nine cubits, they could never reach to fifty, the number of years appointed for ſolemnizing of the Jewiſh jubilee. To ſignify to us that though the flames of this eternal furnace of Babylon, which is hell, are continually caſting forth a moſt violent heat, and put thoſe ſouls which are thrown into them to moſt exquiſite pains and torments, yet they ſhall never purchaſe them the grace and remiſſion of the year of jubilee. O unprofitable pains! O fruitleſs tears! O penance, ſo much the more rigorous, as it is accompanied with perpetual deſpair! How ſmall a part of all thoſe evils you are now forced to ſuffer might have obtained you a pardon, if you would but willingly have undergone it in this life. How eaſily might we prevent our falling into ſuch miſeries with but a little pains and trouble! Let our eyes then burſt out into fountains of tears, and let our hearts break forth into continual ſighs without any intermiſſion. *For this*, ſays the Prophet, *I will wail and howl; I will go ſtript and naked; I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the oſtriches; for her wound is incurable*, Mich. i. 8.

14. If men had never been told of theſe truths, or if they had not looked upon them as infallible, we ſhould not wonder to ſee them fall into that ſupine negligence they are ſubject to. But have we not a great deal of reaſon to be aſtoniſhed, when thoſe very perſons who hold what we have here aſſerted as an article of faith, and know that, as our Saviour has ſaid, *Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but not my word*; that is to ſay, it ſhall infallibly have its effect, live ſo inexcuſably careleſs and unconcerned? Tell me now, O man, blind in body, but blinder much as to ſoul and underſtanding, what pleaſure can you

you find in all the advantages and riches of the world to counterbalance the hazard of your eternal salvation? "If," says St. Jerom, "you were as wise as Solomon, as beautiful as Absalom, as strong as Samson, as old as Enoch, as rich as Crœsus, and as powerful as Cæsar, what good would all this do you, if when you die the worms should prey upon your body, and the devils seize upon your soul to torment it, as they do the rich glutton's, for all eternity?"

Thus much for the first part of the exhortation to virtue. We will treat now of the extraordinary favours which are promised it, even in this life.

THE

THE SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

PART THE SECOND.

Of the SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL ADVANTAGES promiſed to VIRTUE in THIS LIFE, and particularly of twelve EXTRAORDINARY PRIVILEGES belonging to it.

CHAP. I.

Of the eleventh Motive that obliges us to the Purſuit of Virtue, which is the ineſtimable Advantages promiſed it in this Life.

1. I KNOW not what excuſe men can plead for not following virtue, which is ſupported by ſuch powerful reaſons; for in its behalf may be urged all that God is in himſelf, what he deſerves, what favours he has done us, what he ſtill promiſes, and what puniſhments he threatens. And therefore we have cauſe to aſk how there come to be ſo few Chriſtians that ſeek after virtue, ſince they confeſs and believe all that has been ſaid. For it is no wonder that the heathens, who are ignorant of its value, ſhould not prize what they do not know, like a delving peaſant, who, if he happen to find a precious ſtone, makes no account of it, becauſe he is ignorant of its value. But for Chriſtians, who are very well acquainted with theſe great truths, to live as if they believed nothing at all of them, to be ſo entirely forgetful of God, to be

be ſuch ſlaves to their vices, to let their paſſions ſo tyrannize over them, to be ſo wedded to the things of this world and ſo little concerned about thoſe of the next, to give themſelves over to all manner of crimes, as if there were neither death, judgment, heaven or hell; this is what ſhould ſurprize the whole world, and give us ground enough to aſk, *Whence this blindneſs, this ſtupidity proceeds?*

2. This mighty evil owes its riſe to more cauſes than one. The chiefeſt is the general prepoſſeſſion of worldlings, that God reſerves to the next life all the rewards he promiſes to virtue, without making it any recompence in this. This is the reaſon why men, who conſult their own intereſts ſo much, and are ſo violently wrought upon by preſent objects, concern themſelves ſo little about what is to come, as looking after nothing that does not give them an immediate ſatisfaction. Nor is this miſtake a new one, for it is what was made in the days of the prophets. Thus we ſee that whenever Ezekiel either made any great promiſes, or threatened ſeverely in the name of God, the people laughed at him, and ſaid to one another, *The viſion which this man ſees, will not come to paſs yet; nor ſhall his prophecies be fulfilled this great while*, Ezek. xii. 27. They alſo jeered the Prophet Iſaiah, and repeated his words, ſaying, *Command and command again, command and command again, expect and expect again, expect and expect again. A while hence, another while hence*, Iſa. xxviii. 13. This then you ſee is one of the chief reaſons of mens not obſerving the commandments of God. They have nothing they think to hope for from his mercy at preſent, but that all is to be put off till hereafter. Solomon, as very ſenſible of this common error, took occaſion from hence to ſay, 'That the reaſon why men give themſelves over without any kind of conſideration to all manner of vice, is becauſe the ſentence paſſed againſt the wicked is not immediately put in execution.' And afterwards he ſays, 'That the greateſt miſery in this life, and what of all makes men ſin moſt, is to ſee that the good and the bad, that thoſe who offer up ſacrifice and thoſe contemn it, fare alike in all things, in appearance at leaſt:' Eccleſ. ix. 2, &c. And therefore the hearts of men are filled with malice in this life, and they are afterwards plunged into hell. What Solomon ſaid concerning the wicked is ſufficiently confirmed by themſelves, in the Prophet Malachy, ch. iii. 14, 15, where they ſay, *He loſes his labour that ſerves God; and what good have we got by keeping his commandments, and by our walking penſively before the Lord of hoſts? Wherefore we eſteem*

eſteem thoſe happy who are proud, ſince they are exalted, whilſt they commit iniquity, and have tempted God and are yet ſecure. This is the common talk of ſinners, and one of the chief motives of their continuing in their crimes. For, as St. Ambroſe ſays, "they think that to buy hopes with dangers, is too hard a bargain, that is, to purchaſe future goods with preſent evils, and to let go what they have in their hands to feed themſelves up with an imaginary poſſeſſion of things which they have no hold of yet." L. 7. in Luc. c. 7.

3. There is nothing better, in my opinion, to diſabuſe us of this dangerous miſtake, than theſe words of our Saviour, interrupted with his tears, when conſidering the deplorable ſtate of Jeruſalem; he wept over it, ſaying, *Had you alſo known, and that indeed in this day of yours, thoſe things which are for your peace, but now they are hid from your eyes,* Luke xix. 42. Our Saviour conſidered, on one ſide, what advantages this people had received by his coming; for all the treaſures and all the graces of Heaven were brought down from thence, with the Lord of Heaven. On the other ſide, he ſaw that this ſame people, deſpiſing the poor and mean appearance which he made in his dreſs and in his perſon, would neither receive nor own him for what he was. He knew how great a loſs this nation which he loved ſo tenderly would ſuffer by their ignorance. For they were to loſe not only all thoſe graces which he brought with him for them, but their temporal government and liberty. The Lord, puſhed on by the force of his grief, ſhed theſe tears and ſpoke theſe few words, which he broke off abruptly, though they were as ſignificant as they were ſhort. Theſe ſame words may be well applied to our preſent purpoſe; becauſe if, on the one hand, we conſider the beauty of virtue, with the extraordinary graces which go along with it, and how theſe graces, on the other hand, are hid from the ſight of carnal men, it is manifeſt we have reaſon to weep and to ſay with our Saviour, *Hadſt thou but known!* O unhappy ſinner, how great a value would you ſet upon virtue! how would you long after it, and what would you not do for the obtaining of it, ſhould God but open your eyes to let you ſee what riches, what pleaſures, what peace, what liberty, what tranquillity, what light, what ſweetneſs, and what other benefits are its continual attendants? But theſe are all hid from the eyes of worldlings, who, minding nothing but its hard and bitter outſide, imagine all within to be troubleſome and unpleaſant, and that it may paſs for current in the next life, but not in this. So that, reaſoning

ing according to the flesh, they say they will not be at the charge of certain dangers for the purchase of uncertain hopes, nor hazard their present happiness for a slippery dependence upon what is to come. This is the common discourse of those who are daunted by the outward appearance of virtue. They do not know that Christian philosophy is like Christ himself, who, even under the form of a poor and humble man, continued still to be God and the sovereign Lord of all things. And for this reason it is said of the faithful, *That they are dead to the world, but their life is hid with Christ in God*, Coloss. iii. 3. For as our Saviour's glory was concealed under this veil, so should the glory of all such as imitate him. We read of certain images that were called Silenes, course and rough on the outside, but very curious and artificial within, so that all the beauty and art lay hid, whilst that which was but mean and ordinary was turned outward. Thus the eyes of the ignorant were deceived by the appearance, but the inside ingenuity attracted the wiser sort. Such without doubt have been the lives of the prophets and the apostles, and of all true and perfect Christians, as was the life of their Lord and Master.

4. But if you still find the practice of virtue hard, reflect upon the means God has assisted you with to make it easy. Such are the infused graces, with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the sacraments of the new law, and several other divine favours that serve as oars and sails to a ship, or as wings to a bird. Consider what the very name and being of virtue import, which is essentially a very noble and perfect habit; and therefore, regularly speaking, ought like all other habits to make us act with facility and pleasure. Consider farther, that our Saviour has promised to his elect, not only the goods of glory, but those of grace, the latter for this life and the former for the life to come. As the royal Prophet assures us, saying, *The Lord will give grace and glory*, Ps. lxxxiii. 12. which are like two rich vessels filled with all kinds of good things, the one for this life and the other for the next. By which we may see there is something more in virtue than appears at first sight. Consider again, that since God lets us want nothing that is necessary, having so plentifully provided all creatures with whatever they stand in need of, it is not to be imagined, since nothing can be more necessary or of greater importance to man than virtue, that he would leave us intirely to the disposal of our own free wills, which are so weak and impotent, to the blindness of our understanding, to the inconstancy of our humours, to our own desires, which

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are ſo bent to evil, to a nature in ſhort ſo depraved by ſin, without ſtrengthening us with infuſed habits, which are, as it were, oars to help us over all thoſe ſhelves and ſands that hinder us from making our way through the ſea of this life. For it is unreaſonable to think that the Divine Providence which has taken ſo much care for the fly, the ſpider and the ant, having ſupplied them with all things requiſite for their ſubſiſtence, could have left man, the nobleſt of all creatures under heaven, without ſuch means as are neceſſary for his acquiring of virtue.

5. To go farther yet, how can God poſſibly be ſo ſparing to his faithful ſervants as to leave them in their neceſſities and forſake them in the midſt of their ſufferings, whilſt the world and the devil, by too many different falſe delights and pleaſures, win the hearts of thoſe who ſerve them? How can you imagine the practice of virtue to be ſo mean, and that of vice ſo noble? Can you perſuade yourſelf that God would ever permit this laſt ſo much to ſurpaſs the other? What do you think God deſigned to ſignify to us by the anſwer his prophet Malachy made in his name, to the complaints of the wicked? *Return*, ſaid he, *and you ſhall ſee what difference there is betwixt the righteous man and the wicked, betwixt him that ſerves God and him that ſerves him not*, Malac. iii. 18. This ſhows that God does not think it enough to propoſe the advantages of the next life, of which he treats afterwards, to thoſe who return to him; but he ſays to them, *Be converted, and you ſhall ſee;* as if he had ſaid, it is not my only deſign you ſhould wait till the other life to know the advantage you are to make, but return to me and you ſhall ſee, this very moment, what difference there is between the good and the bad, the riches of the one and the poverty of the other, the joy, peace and ſatisfaction the one enjoys, and the ſorrow, reſtleſsneſs and diſcontent that follows the other. The light the one walks in, and the darkneſs that ſurrounds the other. Thus experience will ſhew you how many advantages more than you imagined the followers of virtue have over thoſe that follow vice.

6. God gives almoſt the very ſame anſwer over again to ſome other perſons who had no better opinion of virtue than the former. Theſe deceived by the ſame appearance laughed at thoſe that were virtuous, and ſaid to them, *Let your Lord be glorified, and we ſhall ſee it in your joy*, Iſa. lvi. 5. After theſe few words the Prophet, giving a large account of the torments prepared by God's juſtice for the wicked, immedi-

ately tells us what joys are laid up for the juſt. *Rejoice*, ſays he, *with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her all ye that love her: Rejoice for joy with her all ye that mourn for her. That ye may ſuck and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations, that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus ſaith the Lord, behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing ſtream: Then ſhall ye ſuck, ye ſhall be carried at her breaſts and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth I will comfort you, and ye ſhall be comforted in Jeruſalem. And when ye ſee this your hearts ſhall rejoice, and your bones ſhall flouriſh like an herb, and the hand of the Lord ſhall be known by his ſervants.* ch. v. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. This is to ſignify that as men, by the vaſt extent of the heavens, earth and ſea, and by the brightneſs of the ſun, moon and ſtars, judge of the omnipotence and the infinite beauty of God, the author of theſe wondrous works, ſo the juſt ſhall diſcover the greatneſs of his power, riches and mercy, by thoſe infinite favours he will beſtow on them, and the joy they receive. So that as he ſhowed the world his ſeverity and rigour toward the wicked, by the puniſhments he inflicted upon Pharaoh, he will in the ſame manner ſhew the greatneſs of his love to his elect, by the extraordinary favours he will confer on them. Happy the ſoul that ſhall receive favours from God, in token of his infinite love! and unhappy that whoſe torments and ſufferings ſhall manifeſt the rigour of his juſtice! For each of theſe attributes being infinite, what effects muſt ſuch infinite cauſes produce?

7. I muſt further add, that if you ſhall think the way of virtue uneaſy and melancholy, you may look into thoſe words the Divine wiſdom utters of herſelf, as follows: *I walk in the ways of juſtice, in the middle of the paths of judgment, that I may enrich thoſe that love me, and may fill their treaſures*, Prov. viii. 20, 21. What are theſe riches but the riches of this heavenly wiſdom, far more precious than are the riches of the world, and beſtowed upon the lovers of juſtice, which is the ſame we have hitherto called virtue? For if her riches did not much better deſerve the name than all other riches, how could the Apoſtle have thanked God *for the Corinthians being rich in all ſpiritual things*, 1 Cor. i. 5. He calls them rich without any kind of limitation, whilſt he ſtiles others the rich of this world only.

SECTION

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A Goſpel Authority for what has been ſaid.

8. For the farther proof of what I have ſaid I will add this Divine ſentence of Jeſus Chriſt. St. Mark tells us, that when St. Peter aſked our Saviour what reward they ſhould have who had quitted all for the love of him, he gives him this anſwer: *I tell you truly, there is no body who ſhall have left his houſe, or brothers, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or children, or eſtate, for mine and for the goſpel's ſake, who ſhall not receive an hundred fold now in this life, and in the world to come life everlaſting.* Mark x. 29, 30. If you but weigh theſe words exactly, you cannot in the firſt place deny, but that Jeſus Chriſt makes a formal diſtinction betwixt the rewards of virtue in this life and in the next, the one being a promiſe of a future, and the other of a preſent happineſs. You muſt confeſs too that it is impoſſible this promiſe ſhould not be performed, ſince heaven and earth are ſooner to paſs away than one tittle of theſe words, how hard ſoever they appear, ſhall fail. And as we certainly believe there is in God both Trinity and Unity, becauſe he has ſaid ſo, though this myſtery is beyond the reach of our reaſon, ſo are we to believe this other truth, though it exceeds all human underſtanding, ſince it is grounded upon the ſame authority of God's own word.

9. What then is this *hundred fold* which the juſt receive even in this life? For we ſee they are for the moſt part men of no very conſiderable quality nor very rich, of no great employs in the ſtate, nor enjoy any other worldly advantages, but, on the contrary, many of them live retired, obſcure, poor and neceſſitous. How then can this *infallible* word of God be proved to be true but by acknowledging that God makes them ſo ſpiritually rich, that they are more happy and quiet than if they were ſovereign lords of the world, and yet have no need of any of the conveniencies of this life? Nor is this to be wondered at, becauſe, as God may preſerve mankind by other means, and not by bread alone, ſo it is not neceſſary he ſhould ſatisfy thoſe ſouls he has ſuch a love for with temporal goods, having better ways of doing it. This we have ſeen in a particular manner juſtified in all the ſaints, whoſe prayers, faſtings, tears and labours, have given them a far greater delight and ſatisfaction than all the joys and pleaſures of the world could ever have done; which ſhews us plainly, that

what they received was a hundred times better than what they left for the love of God. For inſtead of the falſe and apparent goods they forſook, they received ſuch as were true and real inſtead of the uncertain, thoſe which were certain, ſpiritual inſtead of corporal, eaſe inſtead of care, quiet inſtead of trouble, and for a vicious and unpleaſant, a life virtuous and delightful; ſo that if for the love of God you have deſpiſed the baſe treaſures of this world, you ſhall find in him ſuch as are ineſtimable. If for his ſake you have contemned falſe honours, you ſhall meet with true ones in him. If you have forſaken a mortal father upon his account, the eternal Father will ſatisfy you with all kinds of delights. If, in fine, you have bid adieu to hurtful pleaſures for the love of him, he will entertain you with ſuch as ſhall be free from the leaſt tincture of bitterneſs or allay. When you ſhall arrive to ſuch a degree of perfection as this is, you will then abhor what you took the greateſt pleaſure in before. For when our eyes are once cleared by this heavenly brightneſs, we diſcover a new light which repreſents things quite different from what they appear to us at firſt. What we then thought ſweet taſtes bitter to us now, and what we looked upon as bitter then we now find to be ſweet. We are pleaſed now with that which frighted us before, and look upon that as hideous and ghaſtly which once ſeemed beautiful and charming. Thus we find our Saviour's words to be verified, by his beſtowing on us the incorruptible goods of the ſoul for the corruptible ones of the body, and for the goods of fortune thoſe of grace, which are incomparably better and more capable to ſatisfy man than all earthly goods.

10. For the farther proof of this important truth I will give you an example taken out of the lives of the famous men of the order of the Ciſtercians. It is there written, "that as St. Bernard was preaching in Flanders, full of zeal for the converſion of ſouls to God, amongſt thoſe who were touched with a particular grace was a certain perſon called Arnulphus, one of the chief men of the country, and cloſely tied to the things of this world. But he at laſt breaking through all, became a Ciſtercian Monk in the monaſtery of Clairvaux. St. Bernard was ſo pleaſed with this great change that he uſed often to ſay, that God had manifeſted his power as wonderfully in converting of Arnulphus as in raiſing of Lazarus from the dead, having drawn him from ſo many pleaſures, which, like a grave, he lay buried in, to raiſe him to a new life, which was no leſs to be admired in its proceſs than it had been in his

his converſion." But becauſe it would be too tedious to give you a particular account of this holy man's virtues, I ſhall only make uſe of what ſerves our preſent purpoſe. "This good monk was very ſubject to terrible fits of the colic, which often put him in a dying condition. One day it ſeized upon him ſo violently that he loſt both his ſpeech and ſenſes. Whereupon the religious ſeeing but little hopes of life left gave him the Extreme Unction. Soon after coming to himſelf he began to praiſe God, and cried out aloud, 'All thou haſt ever ſaid, O moſt merciful Jeſus, is very true.' The religious ſurprized at his frequent repeating of the ſame words, aſked him what he meant, but he made them no anſwer, continuing to cry out louder and louder, 'All thou haſt ever ſaid, O moſt merciful Jeſus, is very true.' Some that were preſent fancied his pains had put him beſide himſelf, but he perceiving their miſtake ſaid to them, 'It is not ſo, my brothers, it is not ſo, for I never was better in my ſenſes than now whilſt I tell you, that all that Jeſus Chriſt has ſaid is very true.' Hereupon the reſt of the monks ſaid, it is what we all of us believe, but why do you repeat it ſo often to us? '*Becauſe*, ſaid he, our Saviour has told us in his goſpel, *that whoſoever ſhall forſake his friends and relations for the love of him, ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this world, and in the world to come life everlaſting*,' Mark x. 30. This is what I find true by my own preſent experience. For I aſſure you, I at this very moment receive that hundred fold, the exceſſive pains I endure being ſo pleaſing to me, through the lively hope I have now given me of my ſalvation, that I would not exchange them for a hundred times as much as I left when I forſook the world. And if ſo great a ſinner as I am finds ſo much ſatisfaction in what I ſuffer, what conſolations muſt they who are perfect be ſenſible of? For the anticipated fruition of thoſe eternal pleaſures which I enjoy now by hopes is not a hundred times only, but a hundred thouſand times better than all the delights the world could ever afford me." They were all aſtoniſhed to hear a man of no learning at all talk ſo piouſly and ſublimely. But it plainly appeared that what he ſaid was dictated by the Holy Ghoſt.

10. This is a demonſtration that God can give thoſe who ſerve him more pleaſure and delight than they forſook for his ſake, and yet not enrich them with temporal goods. And thus we ſee how much in the wrong thoſe men have been who could never perſuade themſelves that virtue had a reward in this life. The twelve following chapters ſhall ſerve for the

better

better undeceiving of ſuch perſons, wherein we ſhall treat of twelve wonderful fruits and privileges that attend virtue even in this life; by which they who have hitherto loved nothing but the world may underſtand that it is more delightful than they imagine. And though it is in ſome manner requiſite for the perfect comprehending of this truth, that a man ſhould have had ſome experience from the practice of virtue, becauſe there is no body knows her own worth ſo well as ſhe herſelf does, this defect may nevertheleſs be ſupplied by faith, ſince by means of it we believe the holy ſcriptures to be true; out of which I intend to prove all I ſhall ſay upon this ſubject, that ſo no one may call the truth of it into queſtion.

CHAP. II.

Of the twelfth Motive that obliges us to the Purſuit of Virtue, which is the particular Care the Divine Providence takes of the Good, in order to make them happy, and the Severity with which the ſame Providence puniſhes the Wicked—The firſt Privilege.

1. OF all theſe favours the greateſt certainly is the care God takes of thoſe who ſerve him. From this, as from their fountain, flow all their other privileges of virtue. For though providence extends itſelf to all creatures, yet we ſee how particularly careful it is of thoſe whom God has choſen for himſelf; becauſe they being his children, and receiving as his gift an affection truly filial for him, he on his ſide loves them with a truly fatherly love, and his love is the meaſure of the care he takes for them. Yet no man can conceive how great his providence is, unleſs he has either had experience of it, or read the Holy Bible with much attention, and obſerved thoſe paſſages there that treat of this matter; for there is ſcarce any part of ſcripture but handles this ſubject. It runs all upon theſe two points, *to aſk and to promiſe*, as the world turns round upon its poles. So that whenever God on one ſide requires our obſervance of his commandments, he promiſes a generous reward to thoſe who comply, and ſeverely threatens ſuch as neglect to obey. This doctrine is ſo diſtributed that almoſt all the moral books in it require and promiſe, whilſt the hiſtorical verify the fulfilling of both, giving to

to us to underſtand how differently God deals with the juſt man and the ſinner.

But conſidering how liberal he is, and how poor man, how ready he is to promiſe, and how backward man is to perform, we muſt needs find a great difference betwixt what he requires and what he gives. All he requires of us is, that love and obedience which he himſelf has given us, and yet in return of that little which we hold purely of his liberality, he offers us ineſtimable riches for this life as well as for the next. Of all which, the chiefeſt is the fatherly love and providence wherewith he aſſiſts thoſe he looks upon as his children, and this is infinitely beyond whatever affection the moſt tender father in the world can ſhew; for never was there any one yet who laid up ſuch riches for his children as God does, which is no leſs than the participation of his eternal glory. Never did any man undergo ſo much for his children as God has done, having for their ſakes ſhed the very laſt drop of his blood. Nor will ever any father take ſo much care of them as God does, ſince he always has them in his ſight and aſſiſts them in all their neceſſities. This holy David acknowledges, when he ſays, *Thou haſt received me into thy care, becauſe of my innocency, and haſt ſtrengthened me in thy ſight for ever*, Pſ. xl. 13. which is to ſay, you have always watched ſo carefully over all my actions as to keep your eyes continually fixed upon me. And in another Pſalm he ſays, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are towards their prayers. But his face is upon thoſe who do iniquity, that he may root out the remembrance of them from the earth*, Pſ. xxxiii. 16, 17.

2. But becauſe this Divine providence is the greateſt treaſure a Chriſtian has, and upon his hopes and aſſurance of being protected by it depends the encreaſe of his confidence and joy, it will be to our purpoſe here to make uſe of ſome paſſages of the ſcripture, in proof of thoſe immenſe riches wherewith God bleſſeth the juſt. In Eccleſiaſticus, ch. xxxiv. 19, 20, it is ſaid, *The eyes of the Lord are upon thoſe that fear him; he is their ſtrong protector, their powerful defence, their covert from the heat, and their ſhade at noon-day. He keeps them from falling, and helps them up when they are down; he raiſes up their ſouls, he enlightens their eyes, and gives them health, and life, and benediction.* The royal Prophet ſays, *The Lord will direct the ſteps of the juſt, and will take care of his way; if he falls down he ſhall receive no hurt, becauſe the Lord puts his hand underneath*, Pſ. xxxvi. 23, 24. What harm can he come to who falls ſo ſoft, and is ſupported by the hand of God? He

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ſays again, in another place, *Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord will deliver them from them all. The Lord preſerves all their bones, not one of them ſhall be broken*, Pſ. xxxiii. 20, 21. This providence is yet much more magnified in the goſpel; for our Saviour himſelf there not only tells us, that he takes care of all their bones, but of their very hair, that not one of them may be loſt, Luke xxi. 18. Thus to expreſs in how extraordinary a manner he protects them; for what is there he will not look after, who does not neglect the very hair of our heads. If this be a declaration of his great concern for us, what the prophet Zachary, ch. ii. 8, tells us expreſſes it no leſs: *Whoſoever*, ſays he, *ſhall touch you, touches the apple of my eye.* It were much had he ſaid, 'whoſoever ſhall touch you, touches me;' but *whoſoever ſhall touch you, touches the apple of my eye*, is ſtill much more.

3. Nor does he only look after us himſelf, but has alſo committed us to the care of his angels: and therefore David ſays, *he has given his angels charge of thee, that they ſecure thee in all thy ways. They ſhall carry thee in their hands, leſt thou ſhouldſt ſtrike thy foot againſt a ſtone*, Pſ. xc. 11, 12. Thus our good angels, like elder brothers, carry the juſt men in their arms, for not knowing how to walk by themſelves they have need of another to lead them. Nor are the angels content to ſerve them thus in this life only, but even at their death too, as appears by the poor man in the goſpel, who, after he was dead, *was carried by angels into Abraham's boſom*, Luke xvi. 22. We are told alſo in another Pſalm, *that the angels of the Lord ſhall be round about thoſe who fear him, and ſhall deliver them*, Pſ. xxxiii. 8. Or, as St. Jerom renders it more ſignificantly, "the angel of the Lord has pitched his camp about thoſe that live in his fear, to preſerve them," B. 4. c. 6. v. 15, 16, 17. What king has ſuch a guard about his perſon as this is? We ſee it plainly in a paſſage out of the Book of Kings, where we read that as the king of Syria's army was marching toward Samaria, with a deſign to take the prophet Eliſha, the holy man took notice of the concern his ſervant was in at the ſight of ſo formidable an army, and prayed to God that he would be pleaſed to open the young man's eyes, and let him ſee that there was a much greater army ready to defend them than that of their enemies. God heard the Prophet's prayer; whereupon the young man ſaw the whole mountain covered with horſe and fiery chariots, and Eliſha in the midſt of them. We read of ſuch another guard in the Canticles, ch. vii. 1. in theſe words: *What will you ſee in the Sulamite*, who is the

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figure of the church and of a ſoul in the ſtate of grace, *but the companies of an army*, which is compoſed of angels? The ſame thing is ſignified by the Spouſe under another figure in the ſame book, ch. 3. 7, 8. where it is ſaid, *Behold Solomon's bed, threeſcore valiant men are about it, of the moſt valiant of Iſrael. They all hold ſwords, and are very expert in war; every man has his ſword upon his thigh, becauſe of fear in the night.* What is all this but a lively repreſentation made by the Holy Ghoſt, under theſe figures of that care the Divine providence has over the ſouls of the juſt? For how can a man who is conceived in ſin, who lives in a body ſo naturally inclined to evil, and who is ſurrounded with ſo many dangers, preſerve himſelf for ſeveral years from committing any mortal crime, did not the Divine providence ſecure and keep him from it.

4. This providence is ſo powerful, that it not only delivers us from evil and leads us to good, but what is more, very often by a wonderful effect draws even good out of evil, which ſometimes God permits the juſt themſelves to fall into. This happens when repenting for their ſins they thence take occaſion to become more circumſpect, more humble, and more grateful to God, for the mercies he has ſhewn them, in freeing them from the danger they were in, and in pardoning them all their faults. It is in this ſenſe the Apoſtle ſays, *that all things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28.

If therefore theſe favours ſo highly deſerve our admiration, how much cauſe have we to wonder at God's being ſo careful of their children, of their whole poſterity, and of all that belongs to them? As himſelf has aſſured us, when he ſaid, *I am the Lord thy God, ſtrong and jealous, viſiting the ſins of the fathers upon their children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and ſhewing mercy to thouſands of thoſe that love me and keep my commandments*, Exod. xx. 5, 6. We find him as good as his word to David, whoſe race he would not deſtroy after a great many years, though ſeveral of them had deſerved it for their ſins, 4 Kings viii. 19. Another example of his care we have in Abraham, whoſe poſterity he pardoned ſo often for their father's ſake. This care of his went ſo far as to promiſe Abraham that he would bleſs his ſon Iſmael, though he were born of a ſlave, *that he would make him increaſe and multiply exceedingly, and that he ſhould grow into a great nation*, Gen. xvii. 20. And all this only becauſe he was Abraham's ſon. We have yet a farther proof hereof, in God's conducting Abraham's ſervant through his whole journey,

ney, and inſtructing him in his buſineſs, when he went to ſeek a wife for Iſaac, ch. xxiv. Nor has he only been merciful to a ſervant, for the ſake of a good maſter, but even to wicked maſters for their pious ſervants ſake, ch. xxxiii. 22, 33. Thus we ſee he beſtowed great favours upon Joſeph's maſter, though a Heathen, in conſideration of the virtuous young man who lived with him. What mercy can exceed this? Who will not ſerve ſuch a Maſter who is ſo liberal and even ſo thankful to thoſe that do him any ſervice, and ſo careful of every thing which belongs to them?

SECTION I.

Of the Titles given Almighty God in Holy Writ, on Account of his Providence.

5. This Divine providence producing ſo many different and wonderful effects, God has therefore a great many different names given him in the holy ſcripture; but the moſt uſual and moſt remarkable is that of *Father*, as his beloved Son calls him in the goſpel, and he has been pleaſed it ſhould be given him in ſeveral places of the Old Teſtament. And therefore David ſays, *As a father pities his children, ſo the Lord pities them that fear him, for he knows that we are but duſt*, Pſ. cii. 23. Another Prophet, not content to call God Father, becauſe his care is infinitely greater than that of a father, ſpeaks thus to him: *Thou, O Lord, art our Father; Abraham knew us not, and Iſrael was ignorant of us*, Iſa. lxiii. 16. to give us to underſtand, that theſe being only our carnal fathers deſerved not that name, in compariſon of God.

6. But becauſe a mother's affection is, generally ſpeaking, more paſſionate and tender than a father's, God is pleaſed to call himſelf a *Mother*, nay, and more than a mother too. *Can a woman*, ſays he, in Iſaiah, ch. xlix. 15, 16. *forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? And though ſhe ſhould forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me* Can any thing be more tender than this? Or can any man be blind to ſuch proofs of love as theſe are?

7. Did we but conſider it is God who ſpeaks, he whoſe truth cannot deceive, whoſe riches are inexhauſtible, and whoſe power has no limits, what joy would ſuch pleaſing words as theſe bring us? But ſuch is the exceſs of God's mercy, that not content to compare his affection with that

of

of common mothers, he amongſt all others choſe the eagle, a creature the moſt remarkable for this love, and compares his tenderneſs to hers, ſaying, by Moſes, *The Lord has ſpread out his wings like an eagle that is teaching her young to fly; and he has taken his people up, and has carried them on his ſhoulders*, Deut. xxxii. 11. The ſame Prophet expreſſed this yet more lively to the people of Iſrael, when, upon their arrival at the land of promiſe, he told them, *You have ſeen how the Lord your God has carried you through the wilderneſs all the way you went, as a man doth his ſon, until you came to this place*, Deut. i. 31. As he does not diſdain to call himſelf our Father, he does us the honour to call us his children; a proof of which we have in the Prophet Jeremy, ch. xxxi. 20. *Ephraim is my ſon whom I will honour, he is my darling child, becauſe I remember him ſtill ever ſince I ſpeak of him; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have mercy on him.* Every word here ſhould be weighed with attention, as coming from God, and ſhould force from us a tender affection for him, in return of his tender love to us.

8. It is upon account of the ſame providence that he gives himſelf the name of a *Shepherd*, as well as that of a Father. And to let us ſee how great this his paſtoral care is, he ſays, *I am the good ſhepherd, and I know my ſheep and my ſheep know me*, John x. 14, 15. How is it, O Lord, that thou knoweſt them? How doeſt thou look after them? *As my Father knows me, and as I know my Father.* O bleſſed care! O ſovereign providence! What greater happineſs can a man enjoy than to be taken care of by the Son of God, juſt as his Father takes care of him? The compariſon, it is true, will not hold in all reſpects, becauſe a begotten Son deſerves much more than one that is only adopted; but to be in any manner whatever compared with him, is a very great honour. God acquaints us with the wonderful effects of this his providence very full and elegantly by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel, ſaying, *Behold I, even I, will both ſearch my ſheep and ſeek them out. As a ſhepherd ſeeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his ſheep that are ſcattered, ſo will I ſeek out my ſheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been ſcattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Iſrael by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good paſture, and upon the high mountains of Iſrael ſhall their food be: there ſhall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat paſture ſhall they feed*

feed upon the mountains of Iſrael. I will feed my flock, and I will cauſe them to lie down, ſaith the Lord God. I will ſeek that which was loſt, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was ſick, and keep the fat and the ſtrong; and I will feed them in judgment, Ez. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. that is, with great care and with a particular providence. A little lower he adds: *I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cauſe the evil beaſt to ceaſe out of the land; and they ſhall dwell ſafely in the wilderneſs, and ſleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill, a bleſſing; and I will cauſe the ſhower to come down in his ſeaſon; there ſhall be ſhowers of bleſſing*, ver. 25, 26. that is to ſay, wholeſome ſhowers, and ſuch as ſhall do no hurt to the places which my flock feeds in. What greater promiſes can God make us, or what more tender expreſſions can he give us of his love? For it is certain, that he does not ſpeak here of a material but of a ſpiritual flock, compoſed of men, as the text itſelf plainly ſhews. It is no leſs certain that he does not mean fat lands, or an abundance of temporal goods, which are common to the bad as well as the good, but, like a good ſhepherd, he promiſes to aſſiſt thoſe that are his with particular graces, upon all occaſions. It is what he himſelf has explained by Iſaiah, ch. xl. 11. where he ſays, *He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd; he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.* Is there any tenderneſs like this? The divine Pſalm which begins thus: *The Lord is my ſhepherd*, Pſ. xxii. is full of theſe charitable offices of a ſhepherd, which God performs to man.

9. As we call God our Shepherd becauſe he guides us, ſo we may call him our King becauſe he protects us; our Maſter, becauſe he inſtructs us; our Phyſician, becauſe he heals us; our Foſter-father, becauſe he carries us in his arms; and our Guard, becauſe of his watching ſo carefully over all our actions. The holy ſcripture is full of ſuch names as theſe. But yet there is none expreſſes a more tender love, or diſcovers his providence more than that of Spouſe, a title he often gives himſelf in the Canticles and in other places of the Bible. It is by this he invites the ſinner to call upon him: *Now at leaſt cry unto me: Thou art my Father, the guide of my virginity*, Jerem. iii. 4. Which name the Apoſtle highly extols; for after thoſe words which Adam ſpoke to Eve, *Therefore ſhall a man leave his father and his mother, and ſhall be joined unto his wife, and they ſhall be two in one fleſh*; he goes on ſaying, *This is a great ſacrament, but I ſpeak in Chriſt and in the church*, which

which is his ſpouſe, Gen. ii. 24. Eph. v. 31, 32. and we may in ſome reſpect, ſay the ſame of every one in the ſtate of grace. What then may we not hope from him who goes by ſuch a name, and that with ſo much reaſon?

But what need is there of turning over the Bible to ſeek for names, ſince there is not one that promiſes us any good but may be applied to God? For whoſoever loves and ſeeks him ſhall in him find whatever he can wiſh. For this reaſon St. Ambroſe ſays, "We have all things in Chriſt, and Chriſt is all to us. If you want a cure for your wounds, he is a phyſician; if you are in a burning fever, he is a fountain; if you are tired with the burthen of your ſins, he is juſtice; if you are afraid of death, he is life in you; if you hate darkneſs, he is the light; if you would go to Heaven, he is the way; if you are hungry, he is your food," L. 3. de Virg. See here how many names God has, who in himſelf is but one; for though he is but one in himſelf, yet he is all things for us, that he may relieve all our neceſſities, which are infinite.

10. It would be tedious to reckon up all the authorities of this kind in the holy ſcriptures. Theſe I have taken notice of for the comfort and encouragement of all that ſerve God, and for the gaining of ſuch as do not; for it is certain there is no greater treaſure under Heaven than this. As therefore thoſe perſons who have ſerved their prince upon ſome extraordinary occaſions, and received certificates under his hand, and promiſes of conſiderable rewards for their ſaid ſervice, are very careful to ſecure thoſe authentic papers, comforting themſelves in the midſt of dangers with the hopes of obtaining the reward of their labours; ſo God's ſervants lay up in their hearts all theſe divine promiſes, which are much more ſecurely to be relied on than any that are made by mortal kings. In theſe they place their hope, theſe are their ſupport in all their toils, their truſt in all their dangers, and their comfort in all their miſeries. To theſe they have recourſe in all their neceſſities. Theſe inflame them with the love of ſo good a maſter, and oblige them wholly to his ſervice, for, as he aſſures them, he will give himſelf intirely up to the procuring of their good, for he is their all. Thus we ſee that the main foundation of a Chriſtian life is the practical knowledge of this truth.

11. Can there be any thing in the world more precious or valuable, or that better deſerves our eſteem and love? or what greater happineſs can a man conceive in this life than to have God for his father, his mother, his ſhepherd, his phyſician, his tutor, his maſter, his mediator, his wall, his defence, and what

what is yet more, for his ſpouſe, in ſhort, for his all? Has the world any thing comparable to this to give to its lovers? How much reaſon then have thoſe who enjoy ſuch a beneſit to rejoice, to comfort, to encourage themſelves, and to glory in him above all things? *Rejoice in the Lord*, ſays the Prophet, *and be glad, ye righteous, and ſhout for joy all ye that are upright in heart*, Pſ. xxxi. 11. As if he had ſaid more clearly, let others rejoice in their worldly riches and honour, others again in their birth and quality, others in their favour and eſteem of their prince, others in their great employs and dignities; but as for you who lay claim to God for your ſhare, do you more truly rejoice in this inheritance, which as far exceeds all other inheritances as God himſelf does all other things. This we may learn from the royal Pſalmiſt, when he ſays, *Deliver me, O Lord, from the hands of ſtrange children whoſe mouth ſpeaketh vanity, and their right-hand is a right-hand of falſhood: Whoſe ſons grow up as the young plants; their daughters are poliſhed after the ſimilitude of the temple. Their garners are full, affording all manner of ſtore. Their ſheep are big with young, and multiply in their ſtreets. They have called that people happy that is in ſuch a caſe. Yea, happy are the people who have the Lord for their God*, Pſ. cxliii. 11, 12, 13, 15. The reaſon why David delivers himſelf thus is evident, becauſe in God alone we poſſeſs every good thing that is to be deſired. Let others value themſelves as much as they pleaſe upon their riches, but as for me, though I am a rich and powerful king, in God alone ſhall be all my glory. Thus another holy Prophet glorified, ſaying, *I will rejoice in the Lord, and will be glad in the God of my ſalvation. The Lord God is my ſtrength, and he will make my feet like hinds feet*, that I may run, without ſtumbling, the courſe of this life, *and he will lead me upon my high places, ſinging his praiſes in pſalms*, Habak. iii. 18, 19. This is the treaſure, this the glory, which he has prepared even here for thoſe that ſerve him. This is a great reaſon why all men ſhould deſire to ſerve him, and upon this will he ground the greateſt complaint he can make againſt thoſe who ſerve him not. Thus it was he complained, by the Prophet Jeremy, ch. ii. 5. of his people: *What iniquity*, ſays he, *have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?* And a little lower: *Have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael, or a land of darkneſs*, ver. 31. as if he ſaid, it is plain it is not ſo, ſince by my means they have been ſo ſucceſsful and victorious. *Wherefore ſay my people, we have departed from thee, we will come no more unto thee. Can a maid forget her ornaments,*

or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number, ver. 32. who am all their ornament, their glory and their beauty. If God complained thus in the time of the old law, when his favours were ſo great, how much more reaſon has he to complain now when they are ſo much greater, as they are more ſpiritual and divine?

SECTION II.

What Providence God uſes towards the Wicked in Puniſhment of their Sins.

12. If the mercy of this bleſſed providence which the good enjoy has no influence on us, let us at leaſt be moved with the fear of that providence, if I may ſo call it, which God uſes againſt the wicked, and which meaſures ſinners by their own meaſure, and deals with them according to their forgetfulneſs and contempt of the Divine majeſty, forgetting thoſe who forget him, and deſpiſing thoſe by whom he is deſpiſed. God, to make this the plainer to us, commanded the Prophet Hoſea, ch. i. 2. to marry an adultereſs, to ſignify to his people the ſpiritual fornication they had committed, in leaving their true ſpouſe and Lord, and ordered a child he had by this wife to be called Lo-ammi, a Hebrew word, which means 'not my people,' to ſhew them that ſince they would not acknowledge nor ſerve him as God, he would not own nor deal with them as his people. And that they might know him to be in earneſt, he ſays to them, *Plead with your mother, plead, for ſhe is not my wife, neither am I her huſband*, ch. ii. 2. giving them to underſtand, that ſince ſhe had not obſerved the reſpect and duty of a good wife, neither would he ſhew her the love and kindneſs of a true huſband. Thus plainly God tells us he will deal with us juſt as we deal with him.

They therefore who live as if they took no notice at all of God, are abandoned by him, and left as a ſchool without a maſter, a ſhip without a rudder, as goods without an owner, or as a flock that goes aſtray for want of a ſhepherd, which never miſſes falling among the wolves. And therefore he tells them by the Prophet Zachary, ch. xi. 9. *I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the reſt eat every one the fleſh of another.* What he ſays by Moſes, in his Canticle, is to the ſame purpoſe: *I will hide my face from them, I will ſee what their end ſhall be*, Deuter. xxxii. 20.

13. He acquaints us more at large with this kind of providence, by the Prophet Iſaiah ſpeaking to his people under the

the figure of a vine, againſt which, for not yielding the fruit that was expected from it, after having been ſo carefully dreſſed and pruned, he pronounces this ſentence: *I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it ſhall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down. And I will lay it waſte, it ſhall not be pruned nor digged, but there ſhall come up briars and thorns; I will alſo command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it*, Iſ. v. 5, 6. that is to ſay, I will take away all thoſe efficacious helps and ſuccours I had given it before, and then muſt neceſſarily follow its utter ruin and deſtruction.

14. Do not you think this ſort of providence is much to be dreaded? What greater miſery can a man fall into than to be deprived of the providential care of God, to be expoſed to all the accidents of the world, and to all the injuries and calamities this life lies open to? For ſince, on the one hand, this world is like the tempeſtuous ſea, a deſert full of ſo many wild beaſts and thieves, ſince there are ſuch a number of misfortunes and accidents, ſo many and ſuch powerful enemies to encounter with, ſo many ſnares laid for us, and ſo many dangers ſurrounding us; and ſince man, on the one hand, is a creature ſo frail, ſo helpleſs, ſo blind, ſo impotent, ſo deſtitute of ſtrength, and ſo much in need of advice, what can he do againſt ſo many ſtrong ones if he wants the help and aſſiſtance of God? What can he who is a mere dwarf do againſt ſo many giants? How can he who is ſo blind avoid ſo many ſnares? Or, alone and unarmed, how can he deal with ſo many enemies?

15. Nor does their puniſhment end here. For God not only turns his eyes from the wicked, whence it follows that they fall into ſuch ſins and miſeries, but does himſelf procure and ſend them theſe afflictions; ſo that the eyes which watched for their advantage before, are now open to their ruin: As the Prophet Amos, ch. ix. 4. teſtifies, ſaying, *I will ſet mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good:* that is, I who before looked upon them, in order to ſecure them, will do it now to puniſh them, according to what their ſins deſerve. And the Prophet Hoſea, ch. v. 12. tells us plainly, that God ſays, *I will be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the houſe of Judah as rottenneſs.* And becauſe this ſeemed too eaſy a puniſhment, and too lingering, he immediately threatens them with another more ſpeedy and more ſevere. *I will be unto Ephraim as a lioneſs, and as a young lion to the houſe of Judah; I, even I, will tear*

tear and go away; I will take away, and none ſhall reſcue, ver. 14. Can any thing be more terrible than this?

16. We have as clear a proof of this kind of providence in the Prophet Amos, who, after telling us that God would put all the wicked to the ſword for the ſins of their covetouſneſs, goes on and ſays, *They ſhall fly, and not one of them that fled ſhall eſcape. Though they dig into hell, thence ſhall my hand take them; though they climb up to Heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themſelves in the top of Carmel, I will ſearch and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my ſight in the bottom of the ſea, thither will I command the ſerpent, and he ſhall bite them; and though they go into captivity before their enemies, thither will I command the ſword, and it ſhall ſlay them; and I will ſet my eyes upon them for evil and not for good*, Amos ix. 1, 2, 3, 4. Theſe are the words of the Prophet. And what man, upon the reading of them, if he but conſider that they were ſpoken by God himſelf, and do but obſerve what kind of providence he exerciſes againſt ſinners, can without trembling ſee how powerful an enemy he has againſt him, and how cloſely he purſues him, having ſecured all the avenues, and lying continually in wait to deſtroy him? What reſt can a man take that reflects upon this? What ſtomach can he have to his meat who has the eyes of God red with indignation and fury fixed upon him? Who has ſuch a perſecutor and ſuch an arm ſtretched out againſt him? For if it be ſo great a misfortune to be deprived of God's favour and providence, what muſt it be to have armed this ſame providence againſt you, and to make him turn that ſword upon you which was drawn in your defence? What an unhappineſs muſt it be to have thoſe eyes open to your deſtruction, which before watched for your ſecurity; to have that arm which was before ſtretched out to hold you up, extended now to caſt you down; to have that heart which thought of nothing for you once but of peace and love, have no other thoughts for you now but of affliction and ſorrow? What a miſery is it that he who ought to ſhade, ſhield and protect you, ſhould be changed into a moth to conſume you, and into a lion to tear you in pieces? How can that man ſleep ſecurely who knows that God all the while ſtands over him, like Jeremy's rod, to puniſh and torment him? What means can he uſe to fruſtrate the deſigns of God? what arm can withſtand his arm? or what other providence can reſiſt his providence? *Did any man*, ſays Job, ch. ix. 4. *ever reſiſt him and proſper?*

17. This evil, in fine, is of ſuch a nature that the withdrawing of his fatherly Providence from ſinners is one of the ſevereſt puniſhments he either inflicts upon or threatens them with in this life, as he himſelf has declared in ſeveral places of the holy ſcripture. In one of which he ſays, *My people would not hear my voice, and Iſrael would not obey me*, Pſ. lxxx. 12, 13. For which reaſon I will not take any notice of them, as I have done before! *So I gave them up unto their own hearts luſts, and let them follow their own imaginations.* Their condition muſt therefore grow every day worſe and worſe. He ſays alſo, by the prophet Hoſea, ch. iv. 6. *Seeing thou haſt forgotten the law of thy God, I will alſo forget thy children.* As there is no greater misfortune can befall a woman than to be divorced from her huſband, nor a vine than to lie neglected and unpruned, ſo the greateſt loſs a ſoul can undergo is to have God withdraw his hand from her. For what is a ſoul without God but a vine without its pruner, a garden without a gardener, a ſhip without a pilot, an army without a general, a commonwealth without a ruler, and, in ſhort, a body without life? See here how God encompaſſes you on all ſides, that the fear at leaſt of being forſaken by him may work upon you, though his providential love and concern do not move you; for fear and apprehenſion often influence thoſe whom favours and benefits can do no good with.

CHAP. III.

Of the ſecond Privilege of Virtue, viz. *the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt beſtowed upon virtuous Men.*

1. FROM this fatherly Providence, as from a fountain, flow all the favours God beſtows upon thoſe who ſerve him. For it belongs to this Providence to ſupply them with all neceſſaries for the obtaining of their end, which is their laſt perfection and happineſs, by aſſiſting them in all their wants, and infuſing into their ſouls ſuch virtues and habits as are requiſite for this end. Of all which the chiefeſt is the grace of the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe next to this Divine Providence it is the beginning of all other heavenly gifts and privileges. It is the garment which was firſt given to the prodigal ſon, upon his return to his father's houſe. And ſhould you aſk me, what this grace is? I anſwer, that grace, as divines

vines define it, is a participation of the Divine nature, that is, of God's ſanctity, purity and greatneſs. By virtue of which a man riſes from the baſeneſs and filth he received from *Adam*, and partakes of the Divine ſanctity and beauty, diveſting himſelf of himſelf, and putting on Chriſt Jeſus. Holy writers explain this to us by this familiar example:—When we take a piece of iron out of the fire, it ſparkles and looks red like fire itſelf, but continues ſtill to be iron, retaining the ſame name and ſubſtance it had before, though the brightneſs, heat, and other accidents belong to fire: ſo grace, which is a heavenly quality, infuſed by God into the ſoul, transforms man into God in ſuch manner as to make him in ſome meaſure partake of the virtues and purity of God, without ceaſing to be man. Thus was he transformed who ſaid, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me*, Galat. ii. 20.

Grace is alſo a divine and ſupernatural form, by means whereof man lives ſuitably to the origin and ſource he proceeds from, which is ſupernatural and divine. And here it is the providence of God ſo glorioufly exerts itſelf. For it being his will that man ſhould have two lives, the one natural and the other ſupernatural, he has to this end given him two forms, which are, as it were, two ſouls, for each life one.—Hence it follows that, as all the powers and ſenſation of the natural life ſpring from the ſoul, the natural form, ſo from grace, the ſupernatural form, flow all thoſe virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt that go to the ſupport of the ſupernatural life. As if one man ſhould furniſh another, that underſtands two trades, with two ſets of tools, to work at them both.

2. Grace is moreover a ſpiritual dreſs and ornament for the ſoul, made up by the hands of the Holy Ghoſt, which renders her ſo acceptable to God that he adopts her for his daughter, and takes her for his bride. It was in this dreſs the Prophet gloried, when he ſaid, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed me with the garments of ſalvation, he hath covered me with the robe of juſtice; as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herſelf with her jewels*, Iſa. lxi. 10. which are the ſeveral gifts of the Holy Ghoſt wherewith the ſoul of a juſt man is adorned and beautified by the hand of God. This is the garment of divers colours with which the king's daughter ſeated at the right hand of her bridegroom was glorioufly arrayed, Pſ. xliv. For from grace come the colours of the different virtues and divine habits, wherein their beauty conſiſts.

By what has been ſaid, we may judge what effects grace works upon the ſoul it reſides in. One of the greateſt is, to make it look ſo lovely and fair to the eyes of God that he chuſes her, as has been ſaid, for his daughter, his ſpouſe, his temple and his habitation, where he takes his pleaſures with the children of men. Another effect is to ſtrengthen the ſoul by means of thoſe virtues it brings with it, which, like Sampſon's hair, at the ſame time confer both force and beauty; ſhe is commended for both theſe qualities in the book of Canticles, ch. vi. 9. where the angels, admiring her beauty, ſay, *Who is ſhe that marcheth forth like the morning when it firſt appears, fair as the moon, clear as the ſun, and terrible as an army in array?* Grace then, as we ſee, is like a complete ſuit of armour which ſecures a man from head to foot. It both beautifies and ſtrengthens him in ſuch a manner that, as St. Thomas ſays, the leaſt degree of grace ſuffices to overcome all the devils and all ſorts of ſin.

3. A third effect of it is, to make man ſo pleaſing to God, and to give him ſuch a power with him, that every action deliberately performed, ſaving thoſe that are ſinful, is acceptable to the deſerving of eternal life. So that not only acts of virtue, but even thoſe actions that are done in ſubmiſſion to the neceſſities of nature, as eating, drinking, ſleeping and the like, are grateful to God, and merit ſuch a favour. For when the object itſelf is ſo agreeable and meritorious, whatever it does that is not ſin muſt be ſo too.

Beſides all this, grace makes man the adopted ſon of God and heir to his kingdom. It cauſes his name to be written in the book of life, and gives him a claim to the inheritance of Heaven. This is the privilege our Saviour ſo highly commended to his diſciples, when, obſerving how pleaſed they were that the devils had obeyed them in his name, he ſaid to them, *Rejoice not in this that the ſpirits are ſubject to you, but rather rejoice becauſe your names are written in heaven*, Luke x. 20. This therefore is the greateſt treaſure a man can wiſh for in this life.

4. It is grace, to conclude, that qualifies man for all kind of good, that makes the way to heaven ſmooth and eaſy, and the yoke of Chriſt light and pleaſant; it is this makes men run in the paths of virtue; it is this that cures the infirmities of nature, and makes that eaſy and light which whilſt ſhe was weak weighed her down; it is this that, by means of thoſe virtues which proceed from it, reforms and ſtrengthens all the faculties of our ſouls, enlightening the underſtanding, inflaming

flaming the mind, refreſhing the memory, fortifying the free will, moderating the concupiſcible appetite, that it may not give way to evil, and rouzing up the iraſcible, that it may not be too backward in the purſuit of good. And becauſe all the paſſions of nature which reſide in theſe two inferior parts, are like ſo many hills that overlook and command the fortreſs of virtue, or as ſally-ports through which the devils enter into our ſouls, to remedy this, grace ſets a centinel at theſe places to ſecure the paſſage; and this is ſome infuſed virtue ſent down from Heaven, and placed there to deliver us from thoſe dangers the heat of our paſſions may expoſe us to. Thus temperance, for example, ſecures us againſt gluttony, chaſtity againſt impurity, humility againſt pride, and ſo of the reſt.

But what is yet above all this, grace brings down God himſelf into our ſouls, that he by his preſence may govern, defend and conduct them to heaven. There he is like a king upon his throne, like a general in his army, like a houſekeeper in his family, like a maſter in his ſchool, and like a ſhepherd amidſt his flock, exerciſing in a ſpiritual manner all their ſeveral offices. If therefore ſo precious a pearl as this is, which brings in ſuch vaſt treaſures, be the inſeparable portion of virtue, can any man refuſe to imitate the direction of the wiſe merchant in the goſpel, who gave all he had for the purchaſe of this jewel? Matth. xiii. 46.

CHAP. IV.

Of the third Privilege of Virtue, viz. *Supernatural Light and Knowledge.*

1. THE third privilege of virtue is a particular light and wiſdom God grants the juſt, which, like all the reſt, comes from that grace we have ſpoken of. For as it is the buſineſs of grace to cure nature and to heal the infirmities occaſioned by ſin in the appetite and will, ſo it enlightens the underſtanding, which was no leſs obſcured by ſin; to the end that man through the one may know his duty, and by the help of the other may put it in execution. It is on this account St. Gregory ſays, in his Morals, "That as man's not knowing his duty is a puniſhment for his ſins, ſo is his not being able to perform it when he does know it." L. 25. c. 9. For the

the ſame reaſon the Pſalmiſt ſo often repeats, *The Lord is my light* againſt ignorance; *the Lord is my ſalvation* againſt the want of power. By the one we are taught what we are to deſire, and we are enabled by the other to bring our deſires about; but they both depend on grace. And therefore beſides the habits of faith and of infuſed wiſdom, which inſtructs us in what we are to believe and what we are to do, there are added the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; whereof four belong to the underſtanding, which are that of wiſdom, to give us the knowledge of the ſublimeſt things; that of knowledge, for thoſe things that are lower; that of underſtanding, to dive into the Divine myſteries and ſee how beautiful they are, and how conſonant to one another; and that of counſel, to direct us how to behave ourſelves amidſt the difficulties ſo frequent to be met with in this life.

All theſe rays of the Divine light are reflected upon us by grace, which in the holy ſcripture is called an unction, or anointing: *And this anointing*, ſays St. John, *inſtructeth you in all things*, 1 John ii. 2. For as oil, above all other liquid things, is good both for the nouriſhing of light and for the curing of wounds, ſo this divine unction performs both, curing the wounds of our will, and enlightening the darkneſs of our underſtanding. This is the oil more precious than any balſam, which holy David gloried in, when he ſaid, *Thou, O Lord, haſt anointed my head with oil*, Pſ. xxii. 5. It is plain he ſpeaks not here of a corporal head or of material oil, but of a ſpiritual head, which is the nobleſt part of our ſouls, and, according to Didymus, upon this place, the ſeat of the underſtanding, and of the ſpiritual oil, which is the light of the Holy Ghoſt that feeds this lamp and keeps it in. This holy king was ſenſible of the light this oil gave, as he himſelf confeſſes in theſe words: *The uncertain and hidden things of thy wiſdom thou haſt manifeſted to me*, Pſ. l. 6.

2. Another reaſon is, that ſince it is grace makes a man virtuous, and ſince it cannot do this without diſpoſing him to a ſorrow for his paſt life, to a horror of ſin, to a love of God, to a deſire of heavenly things, and to a contempt of the earthly, the will can never be excited to ſuch affections unleſs the underſtanding receive a ſufficient light and knowledge to produce them. For the will is a blind faculty altogether unfit to act, unleſs the underſtanding go before and inform it what is good or bad, that ſo it may accordingly fix or withdraw its affection. St. Thomas, to this purpoſe, ſays, "That the knowledge of God's goodneſs and beauty encreaſes in the ſouls

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of the juſt proportionably to the love they have for him. So that if the one advance an hundred degrees, the other will advance as many; becauſe he that loves much muſt know a great many qualities in the thing he loves, which make it deſerve his love; and ſo on the contrary," S. Th. 2. 2. qu. 2. ar. 4. What we ſay of the love of God is alſo to be underſtood of fear, of hope, and of the horror of ſin, which he can never have above all things, if he does not know that it is ſo great an evil as to deſerve ſuch hatred. For as the Holy Ghoſt requires all theſe good affections ſhould be in the ſoul of a juſt man, he expects there ſhould be cauſe to occaſion and produce them, even as when he deſigned to work different effects upon the earth, he appointed there ſhould be different cauſes and influences in the heavens.

3. Moreover ſince, as we have ſaid before, grace makes God dwell in the ſoul of a juſt man, and God, according to St. John, ch. i. 9. *is a light enlightening every man that cometh into this world*, it is certain the purer and cleaner he finds this habitation, the rays of his divine light will ſhine the brighter upon it; as a glaſs, the clearer it is the brighter and the ſtronger it reflects the ſun. St. Auguſtine therefore calls God "the wiſdom of a purified ſoul," Lib. 2. de Lib. Arbit. for enlightening the ſoul, which is in ſuch a ſtate, with the rays of his light, and inſtructing it in what is neceſſary to its ſalvation. And what wonder that God ſhould do this for man, ſince it is in ſome manner what he does for other creatures? For they by a certain natural inſtinct know all thoſe things that are neceſſary for the conſervation of their being. Who has taught the ſheep among ſo many different plants to avoid thoſe which are hurtful to them, and to browſe upon thoſe which are not? From whom has it learned what creature is its enemy and what its friend, and by this means to run from the wolf and to follow the maſtiff? Is it not from God? Now if God thus inſtructs the brutes for the preſerving of their natural life, how much more reaſon have we to think he will enlighten the juſt with ſuch a knowledge as ſhall be neceſſary to the maintaining of their ſpiritual life? conſidering that man ſtands in no leſs need of thoſe things that are above his nature than brutes do of ſuch as are ſuitable to theirs. And if the Divine providence has been ſo careful in providing for what regards nature only, how much more ſolicitous will it be in furniſhing us with ſuch things as regard grace, which are infinitely more excellent, but at the ſame time far above the reach and power of man?

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4. This example teaches us not only that there is ſuch a knowledge, but what a kind of knowledge it is, which conſiſts not ſo much in the ſpeculation as in the practice; ſince it is given us more for the direction of our actions than for the improvement of our underſtanding; and is rather to inſtruct us how to perform all we do virtuouſly, than how to diſcourſe learnedly. For this reaſon it ſtops not at the underſtanding, as that knowledge we acquire in the ſchools does, but communicates itſelf to the will, and makes it ready in the performance of whatever this knowledge inclines it to. This is the property of the inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, who, like an accompliſhed maſter, perfectly inſtructs thoſe under his care in all that is requiſite for them to know. And therefore the Spouſe, in the Canticles, ch. v. 6. ſays, *My ſoul melted away when my beloved ſpake.* Thus we may ſee what difference there is betwixt this and human learning. For whereas the one does nothing elſe but increaſe the underſtanding, the other moreover governs and excites the will, and by its virtue ſearches into all the receſſes of our ſouls, doing all that is neceſſary for the reformation of each in particular. Whereupon the Apoſtle ſays, *The word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword,* Heb. iv. 12. becauſe it ſeparates the ſenſual part of man from the ſpiritual, cutting aſunder thoſe unhappy knots which generally tie the fleſh and the ſpirit together, when the ſpirit, cloſely contracting with the wicked fleſh, becomes one with it. It is the force and efficacy of the word of God that breaks this knot, and makes man follow, not the dictates of the fleſh, but of the ſpirit.

SECTION.

5. This is one of the chief effects of grace, and a particular privilege of virtuous men in this life. But becauſe carnal and ſenſual men perhaps can neither underſtand, nor will ſo readily believe this truth, I will make it plainly appear to them by ſeveral paſſages both of the Old and New Teſtament. In the New, our Saviour ſays, *The Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatſoever I have ſaid unto you,* John xiv. 26. He tells us in another place, ch. vi. 45. *It is written in the Prophets, And they ſhall be all taught by God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me,* Iſ. liv. 13. He has told us in like manner, by his Prophet Jeremy, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and*

and write it in their hearts. And they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, KNOW THE LORD, *for they ſhall all know me,* Iſa. xxxi. 33, 34. In the Prophet Iſaiah, ch. liv. 11, 12, 13. the Lord ſpeaking of the proſperity of his church, uſes theſe words: *Oh, thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted! Behold I will lay thy ſtones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with ſapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleaſant ſtones. And all thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord.* He repeats the ſame again elſewhere by the ſame Prophet: *I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou ſhouldſt go,* ch. xlviii. 16. By theſe words are underſtood two ſorts of knowledge, that of ſaints and that of wiſe men. It is that of the ſaints which Solomon ſpeaks of, when he ſays, *The knowledge of the holy is underſtanding,* Prov. ix. 10. For bare knowledge does but teach us how to know, but prudence inſtructs us how to act by what we know; and this is the knowledge of holy men.

6. Beſides, how often ſhall we find this very ſame wiſdom promiſed to the juſt in David's Pſalms. In one of them he ſays, *The mouth of the righteous ſhall be exerciſed in wiſdom, and his tongue will be talking of judgment,* Pſ. xxxvi. 30. God, in another, makes the good man this promiſe: *I will inſtruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou ſhalt go,* Pſ. xxxi. 8. In another, as if it were a buſineſs of the greateſt conſequence, the Prophet puts the queſtion, ſaying, *What man is he that feareth the Lord, him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chooſe.* Pſ. xxiv. 12. And in the ſame Pſalm we have theſe words: *The ſalvation of the juſt is of the Lord:* which St. Jerom renders thus: "The Lord diſcovers his ſecrets to thoſe that fear him, and he will ſhow them his covenant;" that is, his holy laws are made known to them. This knowledge is a great light to the underſtanding, a delicious food to the will, and the greateſt pleaſure man can enjoy. The ſame Prophet calls it, a paſture in which God fed him, a water with which he refreſhed his ſoul, and a table upon which were placed ſuch meats, as might ſtrengthen him againſt all the power of his enemies, Pſ. xxii. 2, 5. For which reaſon the ſame Prophet ſo frequently begs for this inward light, and for their inward inſtructions, in that Divine Pſalm which begins, *Bleſſed are the undefiled,* Pſ. cxviii. To this end he ſays in one place, *O Lord, I am thy ſervant; give me underſtanding that I may know thy teſtimonies,* ver. 125. In another place, *Open thou*

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my eyes, O Lord, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law, ver. 18. And again, *Give me underſtanding, and I ſhall ſearch into thy law, and I ſhall obſerve it with my whole heart*, ver. 34. This is, in fine, the petition he ſo often makes in this Pſalm. Nor would he have done it with ſuch earneſtneſs, had he not been very well acquainted with its efficacy and with the manner of God's communicating the ſame.

7. All this being undeniably true, what greater honour can a man receive than to have ſuch a maſter and ſuch a ſchool to go to, where the Lord himſelf teaches his elect this heavenly wiſdom? If, as St. Jerom ſays, men in former times went as far as Rome, from the very remoteſt parts of France and Spain, to ſee Livy, a man ſo renowned for his eloquence, Ep. 120. ad Paulin. And if Apollonius, who had the falſe reputation of one of the wiſe men of his age, went to Mount Caucaſus, and rambled the greateſt part of the world, to ſee Hiarchas ſitting amongſt a few ſcholars upon a golden throne, diſputing with them upon the motions of the heavens and of the planets, what ſhould men do to hear God ſeated on the throne of their hearts, not to teach them how the heavens move, but how they themſelves may move thither?

8. And that you may not look upon this doctrine as contemptible, hear the royal Prophet's commendations of it: *I have more underſtanding than all my teachers, becauſe thy teſtimonies is my meditation; I underſtand more than the aged, becauſe I have ſought after thy commandments*, Pſ. cxviii. 99, 100. Nay, the Lord promiſes more than all this, by his Prophet Iſaiah, to thoſe that ſerve him: *The Lord*, ſays he, *ſhall give thee reſt, and ſhall fill thy ſoul with brightneſs, and ſhall ſet thy bones at liberty: and thou ſhalt be like a watered garden, and like a ſpring of water, whoſe waters ſhould not fail*, Iſa. lviii. 11. What brightneſs is this wherewith God fills the ſouls of his ſervants, but the knowledge he gives them of things neceſſary to their ſalvation? For it is he that ſhews them how beautiful virtue is, and how deformed vice; he it is that tells them how vain a thing the world is, that informs them of the worth of grace, the greatneſs of eternal glory, the ſweetneſs of thoſe conſolations which the Holy Ghoſt beſtows, the goodneſs of God, the malice of the devil, the ſhortneſs of life, and the general miſtake of moſt men. God, as the ſame Prophet obſerves, by virtue of this knowledge makes his ſervants dwell on high, *that they may behold the king in his beauty, and look down upon the earth that is very far off*, Iſa. xxxiii. 17. Therefore the things of this world are of ſo little value with them, becauſe, beſides their being generally

generally ſo, they ſee them only at a diſtance; but as to the riches of the other world, they prize them at what they are worth, as having a very near view of them. The wicked, on the contrary, having a diſtant proſpect of heavenly things, and ſtanding ſo cloſe by the earthly, undervalue thoſe and over-rate theſe. This it is preſerves ſuch perſons as partake of this heavenly gift from being either puffed up with proſperity, or caſt down by adverſity; for they, by the help of this light, ſee how little what the world can give them is in compariſon of what they have from God. And therefore Solomon ſays, *The godly man remaineth in wiſdom like the ſun, but the fool is changed like the moon*, Eccluſ. xxvii. 12. Upon which words St. Ambroſe ſays, "That as for the wiſe man, neither can fear move him, nor power change him; amidſt his proſperity he is never proud, Epiſt. L. 2. nor melancholy in the midſt of troubles," Ep. 7. becauſe virtue, ſtrength and courage are the perpetual attendants of wiſdom. Such a man's ſoul is always in an even temper, no change makes him either greater or leſs, nor is he to be carried away by the winds of a new doctrine, but remains ſteady in Jeſus Chriſt, immoveable in his charity, unſhaken in his faith.

9. Nor are we to wonder at the force of this wiſdom, ſince it is not earthly, but heavenly; which does not puff up, but edify; which does not enlighten the underſtanding by its ſpeculation, but inflames the will with its heat. Thus wonderfully was St. Auguſtine touched and moved, that, as is written of him, he never heard the pſalms and hymns of the church ſung but he wept. The words, entering in at his ears, ſunk down to the very bottom of his heart, whilſt the warmth of his devotion ſpread the truth of them throughout his whole ſoul. This made him break out into tears, and according to his own confeſſion gave him a great deal of joy and comfort: O bleſſed tears! O divine ſchool! O happy wiſdom that bears ſuch fruit as this is! Conf. L. 9. v. 24. Is there any thing in the world we can compare with this wiſdom? Job ſays, *it cannot be gotten for gold, neither ſhall ſilver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the ſapphire. No mention ſhall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of wiſdom is above rubies, &c.* Job xxviii. 15, 16, &c. After all theſe commendations the holy man concludes: *Behold the fear of the Lord that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil is underſtanding*, ver. 28.

10. This is one of the greateſt rewards that can be offered to excite you to follow virtue. And Solomon makes this propoſal

poſal to encourage men to a good life. *My ſon, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wiſdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding,* Prov. i. 5, 6. This wiſdom does not always continue in the ſame degree, but receives a daily increaſe of light and knowledge, as the ſame wiſe man has hinted to us: *The path of the juſt,* ſays he, *is as the ſhining light that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day,* Prov. iv. 18. the day of this bleſſed eternity, wherein we ſhall receive the Divine inſpirations, I will not ſay with Job's friends, by ſtealth, but ſhall have a full ſight and knowledge of God himſelf, Job iv. 12.

11. Of this true wiſdom the children of light partake, whilſt the wicked, on the contrary, live in ſuch ignorance that, like the Egyptian darkneſs, they may feel it with their hands. We have a lively figure of the one in the land of Jeſſen, where the Iſraelites lived, which always enjoyed the light; and of the other, in the land of Egypt, Exod. x. 22, 23. which was quite covered over with darkneſs, a true emblem of that horrible blindneſs in which the wicked live, as they themſelves acknowledge in Iſaiah, when they ſay, *We wait for light, but behold obſcurity; for brightneſs, but we walk in darkneſs. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we ſtumble at noon-day, as in the night; we are in deſolate places as dead men,* Iſ. lix. 9, 10. What greater blindneſs than what the wicked fall into every ſtep they take? What greater blindneſs than for a man to ſell the ſolid joys of Heaven for the vanities of the world? What greater blindneſs than for a man not to be afraid of hell, not to ſeek after Heaven, not to have a horror of ſin, nor to think of the laſt judgment, not to regard either the threats or promiſes which God has made, not to be afraid of death which may every moment ſurprize him, not to prepare himſelf for the making up of his accounts, not to ſee how ſhort a momentary his delights are, whilſt the torments that ſhall follow them are to laſt for ever? *They will not be learned nor underſtand,* ſays the royal Prophet, *but walk on ſtill in darkneſs,* Pſ. lxxxi. 5. from an inward darkneſs to an outward one, from the darkneſs of this life to that of the next.

12. I ſhall conclude this chapter with a word or two of advice, which is, that, notwithſtanding the truth of all I have ſaid upon this matter, a man, how juſt ſoever he is, ſhould not upon this account withdraw himſelf from the humble ſubmiſſion

miſſion he owes to the opinion and counſel of thoſe above him, eſpecially of ſuch as are looked upon as the doctors of the church. For was ever any man more enlightened than St. Paul or Moſes, who talked with God face to face? And yet one of them goes to Jeruſalem, to confer with the apoſtles upon the goſpel he had learned in the third heaven, Galat. ii. 1, 2. And the other refuſes not the advice of Jethro his father-in-law, though a heathen, Exod. xviii. The reaſon is, becauſe the inward helps of grace do not exclude the outward aſſiſtance of the church, ſince the Divine providence has been pleaſed to allow them both to ſupply our weakneſs, which ſtands much in need of them. As therefore the outward heat of the air maintains the inward natural heat, and as nature, after all its care to procure the health of every particular, is aſſiſted with ſuch medicines as have been created for this end, ſo is the light and doctrine of the church a help to the inward lights and aſſiſtances of grace, and whoſoever refuſes with humility to ſubmit to the authority of the one, is to be judged unworthy to receive the favours and helps of the other.

CHAP. V.

Of the fourth Privilege of Virtue, viz. *the Conſolations which good Men receive from the Holy Ghoſt.*

1. I MIGHT here very well, after having ſpoken of the light of the Holy Ghoſt, which enlightens the darkneſs of our underſtandings, reckon charity and the love of God, with which our wills are inflamed, for the fourth privilege of virtue, eſpecially ſince the Apoſtle accounts it the firſt fruit of the Holy Ghoſt. But our deſign at preſent being not ſo much to treat of virtue itſelf as of the favours granted to it, and charity being not only a virtue, but of all virtues the nobleſt, we ſhall forbear to treat of it here; not, but that we might ſpeak of it in this place, though not as of a virtue, yet as of a gift which God beſtows upon the virtuous, inflaming their wills in an unſpeakable manner, and making them love God above all things. The more perfect this virtue grows, the pleaſanter it becomes, ſo that we may therefore look upon it as the fruit and reward, not only of other virtues, but of itſelf too. But not to be thought ambitious of ſpeaking too much in commendation of this virtue, which gives us ſo many other

other occaſions of ſpeaking in its favour, I will aſſign the fourth place to the joy and comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, it being the natural property of charity itſelf, and one of the chief fruits of this ſame ſpirit, as St. Paul tells us, Galat. v. 22.

2. This privilege is a branch of the former; becauſe, as we ſaid before, this light with which God enlightens his ſervants does not ſtop at the underſtanding, but deſcends into the will, and there darts out the rays of its brightneſs, with which it entertains them and gives them a wonderful delight in God. So that from this ſpiritual light comes the ſpiritual joy we ſpeak of, as the material light produces the heat we perceive by our ſenſes. This gave the royal Prophet occaſion to ſay, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart*, Pſ. xcvi. 11. We have handled this ſubject elſewhere, yet we may venture to ſpeak of it again, without any fear of repeating what we ſaid before.

3. For the better purſuing the deſign of this book, we muſt firſt explain the greatneſs of this joy, becauſe the knowing of this will go a great way towards making men in love with virtue. We every one of us know, that as all kinds of miſeries are included in vice, ſo are all kinds of delights in virtue, thoſe excepted which the wicked complain it has not. For which reaſon, man being naturally ſuch a friend to pleaſure, theſe perſons tell us, by their actions at leaſt, if not by word of mouth, that they had rather enjoy what pleaſes them, though at the expence of their ſalvation, than not to ſatisfy their ſenſual deſires, though hell is to follow the contenting of them. Lactantius, writing upon this ſubject, ſays, "That men are frightened into a flight from virtue, and charmed into a purſuit of vice, becauſe virtue has a kind of ſenſible pleaſure attending it," L. 2. de Falſa Relig. c. 2. This being the riſe of ſo many misfortunes, he that ſhall diſabuſe men of this miſtake, and ſhew them plainly that the way of virtue is much more pleaſant than that of vice, muſt certainly be very ſerviceable to mankind in general. My deſign therefore is to prove this to them by unqueſtionable authorities, drawn particularly from the holy ſcripture, the beſt proof we can bring for matters of this nature, ſince heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but the words of God ſhall not, Mark xiii. 31.

4. Tell me now, blind and deluded man! if the way to Heaven be ſo rough and ſo unpleaſant as you imagine it is, what means the prophet David, when he ſays? *O how plentiful is thy ſweetneſs, which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee!* Pſ. xxx. 20. Here he lets us ſee what delights the virtuous enjoy,

joy, and why they are unknown to the wicked, becauſe God hides them from ſuch. What likewiſe do theſe words of the ſame Prophet ſignify: *My ſoul doth rejoice in the Lord, it ſhall be joyful in his ſalvation. All my bones*, that is, all the powers of my ſoul, *ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like unto thee?* Pſ. xxxiv. 9, 10. This is to teach us that the comfort the juſt have is ſo great, that, notwithſtanding it is immediately received by the ſpirit, it rebounds in ſuch a manner upon the fleſh, that though its chief delight is in carnal things, yet, by the communication of the ſpirit, it is pleaſed with the ſpiritual, and places its ſatisfaction in God, and that with ſuch tranſports of joy that all the bones of the body being raviſhed with this ſweetneſs, men are forced to cry out, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord?* What pleaſures are to be compared with thoſe we enjoy in thee? what content, what love, what peace, what delight can any creature give us, like what we receive from thee? What is it again the ſame Prophet means by his ſaying, *The voice of rejoicing and ſalvation is in the tabernacles of the juſt?* Pſ. cxvii. 15. but to tell us, that true peace and pleaſure are no where to be met with but in the dwellings of the juſt. He ſays in another place, *Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice*, Pſ. lxvii. 3. And this to ſhew us what ſpiritual feaſts God often makes for the entertainment of his elect, by giving them a taſte of heavenly things for the refreſhment of their ſouls.

5. It is at theſe divine banquets they drink that delicious wine, the ſame Prophet ſo highly commends: *They ſhall be inebriated*, ſays he, *O Lord, with the plenteouſneſs of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures*, Pſ. xxxv. 8. Could the Prophet have uſed more expreſſive words to ſhew how theſe delights even force men to a hearty love of God? For as one that has drank a great deal of wine loſes the uſe of his ſenſes, and is, in that point, like a dead man, ſo he that has once drank of this celeſtial liquor, dies to the world and to the irregular deſires of what is in it.

6. We read again, *Happy is the people that knows what jubilation is!* Pſ. lxxxviii. 16. Others would perhaps have ſaid, happy they who roll in riches, who are incloſed with ſtrong walls, and have their ſoldiers to defend them! But holy David, who had a good ſhare of theſe things, terms only him *happy* who by experience knows what it is to rejoice in God, and that not with an ordinary joy, but with ſuch a one as deſerves the name of jubilation; which, according to St. Gregory, is a joy of ſpirit we can neither expreſs by words, nor diſcover by outward

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ſigns and actions, L. 24. Moral. c. 3. Happy they who have made ſuch an advance in the love of God, as to have experience of this jubilation! It is a knowledge which neither Plato, with all his wiſdom, nor Demoſthenes, with his charming eloquence, could ever arrive to. For God reſides in none but the pure and humble heart. If then God be the author of this joy, how great muſt it be of courſe, ſince the comforts that come from him are as equally proportioned to himſelf, as are the puniſhments he inflicts? If then he puniſhes with ſo much rigour, with what ſweet delights muſt he fill the ſouls of thoſe that love him? If his arm is ſo heavy when he holds it out to chaſtiſe, how light muſt it be when ſtretched out to careſs? For he is generally more wonderful in his works of mercy, than he is in thoſe of juſtice.

7. What cellar of rich wine is that which the Spouſe in the Canticles, ch. i. 3. boaſts of her being carried into by her beloved, and of being filled there with charity and love? What noble banquet is that which the ſame Spouſe invites us to?—*Eat, O my friends, drink and be ye inebriated, my beloved,* Cant. v. 1. We look upon a man to be drunk when, having had more wine than his natural heat can digeſt, the vapours fly up into his head, and rendering him incapable of governing himſelf, force him to follow the impreſſions they make upon his imagination. If this be ſo, what condition muſt a ſoul be in that has drank ſo much of this heavenly wine, and is ſo full of God and of his love as to be overcharged with an exceſs of delights and pleaſures, and to be made unable with all its force to bear up under ſuch a weight of happineſs? So it is written of St. Ephrem, that he was very often ſo overpowered with the ſtrength of the wine of this Divine ſweetneſs, that his body not being able to ſupport theſe delights, he was forced to cry out, "Retire from me a little, O Lord, becauſe by body is too weak to endure the force of thy ſweetneſs any longer," St. John Clim. deg. 19.

8. O unſpeakable goodneſs! O immenſe ſweetneſs of this ſovereign Lord! who communicates himſelf with ſuch profuſion to his creatures, that their bodies are too weak, and their hearts too narrow, to endure and contain the ſtrength and fulneſs of ſuch charms! It is by this celeſtial wine the powers of the ſoul are lulled aſleep; it is this that gives them a gentle ſlumber of peace and life; it is this that raiſes the ſoul above herſelf; it is by the virtue of this ſhe knows, and loves, and enjoys ſuch pleaſures as are far above the ſtrength of her natural faculties. Hence it follows, that as water over a fire, when it

it has arrived to a certain degree of heat, forgetful, as it were, of its own quality, which is to be heavy, and conſequently to tend downward, mounts upwards, borrowing the natural lightneſs of fire which gives it this extraordinary motion; ſo the ſoul, warmed with this heavenly fire, lifts herſelf up above herſelf, and endeavouring to fly from earth to heaven, from whence this flame was darted, is tranſported with the deſire of enjoying God; runs after him with all the ſpeed ſhe can to embrace him, and ſtretches out her hands to catch at him whom ſhe ſo paſſionately loves. But if ſhe can neither overtake him, nor cool the heat of her flames, ſhe pines and languiſhes under the loſs of her wiſh, and all the comfort ſhe has is to ſend up her amorous ſighs to Heaven, crying out with the Spouſe, in the Canticles, ch. ii. 5. *Tell my beloved, that I am ſick of love.* Holy writers inform us that theſe languiſhings proceed from the oppoſition the ſoul meets with in the effecting of her deſires. Whereupon one of them ſays, "Be not diſcouraged, O amorous ſoul, for thy ſickneſs is not to death, it is for God's glory, and that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," St. John c. xi. 4. But what tongue can expreſs the charms and pleaſures theſe happy lovers enjoy upon Solomon's ſtately bride-bed, *which was made of the wood of Libanus, the pillars thereof were of ſilver, and the bottom of gold?* Cant. iii. 9, 10. Here it is the ſpiritual marriage-feaſt is kept. It is called a *bed*, for its being a place of reſt and love, and where they enjoy ſuch pleaſures, that, as St. John ſays, in his Revelation, no man can conceive how great they are but he that has experienced them. Though the knowledge of theſe things be hid from us, we may nevertheleſs frame to ourſelves ſome idea of them. For if a man does but conſider what an exceſs of love the Son of God has for him in ſuffering ſuch unheard-of injuries and torments for his ſake, he cannot wonder at what we now ſay, ſince it is but little when compared to this. What will he not do for the juſt, who has undergone ſo much for ſinners? How will he careſs and make much of his friends, who has indured ſuch pains, as well for his enemies as for them? We have a token of this in the book of Canticles, where the heavenly bridegroom ſhews ſuch a paſſionate tenderneſs to his bride, which is the church, and every particular perſon in the ſtate of grace. Such amorous diſcourſe paſſes there between them, that no other eloquence or love can expreſs the like.

9. We may alſo conjecture at it from the juſt themſelves, God's true friends, for if you look into the hearts of thoſe

perſons, you will find their greateſt concern and deſire, and the perpetual employment of their thoughts is the ſervice of God, and the putting themſelves into a condition of doing ſomething for him, who has done and who continues every day to do ſo much for them, treating them with ſuch ſweetneſs and love. If therefore man, of himſelf ſo unfaithful, and ſo unable to do any good, can nevertheleſs be ſo faithful to God, what is there that God will not do for him? God who is infinite in his fidelity and love. If it is the property of God, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *to be holy with the holy, and good with the good*, Pſ. xvii. 26. and if man can arrive to ſuch a degree of goodneſs, as we have ſaid he can, how far will the goodneſs of God reach? If God ſhould vie with juſt men upon this point, how much will he outdo them in this glorious ſtrife? If therefore a good man is willing to do ſo much to make himſelf pleaſing to God, what will not God do in return to comfort and pleaſe him? He will do more than we can expreſs or conceive. For this reaſon the prophet Iſaiah ſays, *The ear hath not heard, neither hath the eye ſeen, what thou, O God, haſt prepared for thoſe that wait for thee*, ch. lxiv. 4. This is to be underſtood, not of the goods of glory only, but, according to St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. of thoſe of grace too.

10. This ſure may ſuffice to ſhew us how pleaſant the way of virtue is, and that the delights of this world are not to be compared with what the juſt enjoy. For what compariſon is there betwixt light and darkneſs, Chriſt and Belial, between the pleaſures of earth and thoſe of heaven, the ſatisfactions of the fleſh and thoſe of the ſpirit, the delights which come from the creature and thoſe from the Creator? It is certain the more excellent a thing is, the more capable it is of contenting us. What could the Prophet mean elſe, when he ſaid, *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked*, Pſ. xxxvi. 16. And in another place: *I had rather be an abject perſon in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly*, Pſ. lxxxiii. 11. Theſe words of the Spouſe, in the Canticles, teach us the ſame leſſon: *Thy breaſts are better than wine.* And a little lower: *We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy breaſt more than wine*, Cant. i. 1, 3. that is to ſay, we will think of the moſt delicious milk of comforts and careſſes more ſweet than wine, with which you feed your ſpiritual children at your breaſts. It is certain that neither material wine nor material milk is meant here; for by theſe are underſtood the pleaſures of the world, which the lewd woman in the Apocalypſe, xvii. ſeated over many

many waters, clothed in ſcarlet and holding a golden cup in her hand, made the inhabitants of Babylon drunk with; thus drowning their ſenſes, that they might be careleſs of their ruin.

SECTION I.

It is particularly in Prayer that the Virtuous enjoy theſe Divine Conſolations.

11. If, upon farther enquiry, into this matter you ſhould aſk me, where it is particularly the virtuous enjoy theſe comforts, God himſelf will anſwer the queſtion, by the prophet Iſaiah, ch. lvi. 6, 7. *The ſons of the ſtranger*, ſays he, *that join themſelves to the Lord, to ſerve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his ſervants every one that keepeth the ſabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my houſe of prayer.* So that it is in this holy employ, particularly, that the Lord comforts his elect in ſuch a manner. It was upon this occaſion, St. Laurence Juſtinian ſaid, Tract. de Ord. in Lig. Vitæ. "The hearts of the juſt are inflamed with the love of their Creator, whilſt they are at their prayers. It is then they are ſometimes raiſed above themſelves, and imagine they are amidſt the choirs of angels, ſinging with them in the preſence of their God; it is then they love and moan; it is then they praiſe, weep, and rejoice; it is then they eat, and are ſtill hungry; they drink without being ſatisfied, and endeavour with all the force that love can give them, to transform themſelves into you, O Lord, whom they contemplate by faith, whom they adore with humility, whom they deſire with paſſion, and enjoy with the utmoſt heat of love. It is then they, by their own experience, find theſe words of yours to be true: *My joy ſhall be fulfilled in you,*" John iii. 29. This joy, like a gentle ſtream, ſpreads itſelf over all the faculties of the ſoul; it enlightens the underſtanding; it pleaſes the will; it refreſhes the memory, and makes them think of nothing but God, and they lovingly embrace what they are unacquainted with, and which yet they have ſuch a paſſion for, that they had rather die than loſe it. Thus the heart wreſtles with this Divine ſweetneſs, for fear it ſhould get away, being the only object of its wiſhes, as the patriarch Jacob did with the angel, Gen. xxxii. 26. And thus like St. Peter, upon the mountain, it cries out, *O Lord, it is good for us to be here*, Matt. xvii. 4. It is here the ſoul has all that amorous diſcourſe which is in the Canticles addreſſed to her, whilſt ſhe, on her ſide, ſings

theſe charming airs of love: *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Support me with flowers, comfort me with apples, for I am ſick of love,* Cant. ii. 5, 6. Then it is the ſoul, inflamed with theſe Divine heats, deſires nothing more than to break out of the priſon of her body, whilſt her tears are her food both day and night, becauſe the time of her enlargement is not yet come. Life is the trial of her patience, but the object of her deſires is death; and therefore ſhe is continually uſing theſe words of the Spouſe: *Who will tell me where thou art, my brother, who ſuckeſt the breaſt of my mother? When I ſhall find thee without I would kiſs thee,* Cant. viii. 1. It is then ſhe is aſtoniſhed at herſelf, and wonders how ſuch treaſures could be hid from her ſo long; but finding it is a happineſs which every man is capable of enjoying, ſhe longs to run up and down in the ſtreets and public places, and to cry out, Fools and madmen! whither do you run? what is it you are in ſearch of? why do you not run to the poſſeſſion of ſuch a treaſure as this is? *Taſte and ſee how ſweet the Lord is; happy is the man that puts his truſt in him,* Pſ. xxxiii. 9. When the ſoul has once taſted theſe ſpiritual pleaſures, no carnal delights will reliſh with her. Company is then a reſtraint upon her, whilſt ſhe accounts upon ſolitude as a paradiſe; for all her deſire and comfort is to be alone with her God whom ſhe loves. Honours and preferments are but a burden to her, and an eſtate and family a torment. She would not for all the world, no, not for Heaven itſelf, be deprived of her comforts; and for this reaſon all her endeavours are to diſengage herſelf from the world. She has but one love, and one deſire; ſo that whatſoever ſhe loves, it is for the ſake of one alone, and this one ſhe loves in all things; ſhe knows how to cry out, with the royal Prophet, *What have I, O Lord, in Heaven, or what is there upon the earth that I deſire beſides thee? My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, God is my portion for ever,* Pſ. xxii. 25, 26.

12. The knowledge of holy things ſeems no longer obſcure to a ſoul in this ſtate; ſhe ſees them now with other eyes, and feels ſuch motions and changes within her as are ſtrong proofs of every article of faith. She thinks the day long and tedious, and the management of her temporal concerns is troubleſome to her, longing till the night comes, that ſhe may ſpend it in the company of her God. She never looks upon the night as too long; the longeſt, on the contrary, are thoſe ſhe deſires moſt. If they happen to be clear,

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with her eyes caſt up towards Heaven, ſhe admires its beauty and the brightneſs of the moon and ſtars, conſidering them quite differently from what ſhe uſed to do, and much more cheerfully; ſhe looks upon them as ſo many marks of her Creator's beauty, and ſo many mirrors of his glory, as ſo many meſſengers that come to bring her news of him, as ſo many lively draughts of his grace and perfections, and as ſo many preſents which the bridegroom ſends his bride, to endear and make her conſtant to him, till he himſelf ſhall come and lead her by the hand to conſummate this happy marriage, for an eternity in Heaven; ſhe looks upon the whole world as a book that treats of nothing elſe but of God; ſhe regards it as a letter from her beloved, and a token of his love. Theſe are the pleaſures and delights they that love God paſs the nights in; theſe the quiet ſleeps they enjoy. For the regular motions, all creatures obſerve, are like an harmonious conſort to the ſoul, that makes her ſlumber a little and lulls her into the gentle and ſoft ſleep, of which it is ſaid, *I ſleep, but my heart waketh*, Cant. v. 2. And when her deareſt ſpouſe perceives her thus at reſt within his arms, he takes care not to diſturb her, and gives orders that no body preſume to wake her, ſaying, *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love, till ſhe pleaſe*, Cant. ii. 7.

What do you think now of ſuch nights as theſe? Which do you imagine to be the pleaſanter, theſe, or thoſe of worldlings, who ſpend this time lying in wait to defile innocent virgins, to rob them of their chaſtity, and to make them loſe their honour and their ſouls. Thus they miſerably expoſe themſelves to the hazard of their own lives, heaping up for themſelves a treaſure of vengeance againſt that day wherein God will puniſh them according to the heinouſneſs of their crimes, Rom. ii. 5.

SECTION II.

Of the Comforts they enjoy who begin to ſerve God.

13. Perhaps you will tell me ſuch extraordinary favours as theſe are for none but thoſe who have already advanced far in perfection and virtue. It is true they are for them, but yet God preſents even thoſe who are but juſt entered into his ſervice with all the bleſſings of his conſolations. He feeds them at firſt like children with milk, and brings them by degrees to eat more ſolid meats. You ſee how the prodigal ſon was entertained

entertained at his return, and welcomed home with muſic and with feaſting. This is but a repreſentation of the ſpiritual joy which the ſoul conceives, when ſhe ſees herſelf eſcaped out of Egypt and freed from the captivity of Pharaoh, from the ſlavery of the devil, Luke xv. For how can a ſlave, when he has got his liberty, chuſe but be glad of ſuch a benefit? What can he do leſs than invite all creatures to thank his deliverer with him? *Let us praiſe the Lord, for he hath triumphed glorioufly; the horſe and his rider hath he thrown into the ſea*, Exod. xv. 1.

14. If this were not ſo, where would be that providence which ſupplies every creature ſo fully, according to its nature, ſtrength, age, and capacity? For it is certain carnal men could never be able to enter into this new road and trample the world under foot, unleſs God ſhewed them ſuch favours. To this end his Divine providence takes care, as ſoon as ever it has determined to diſengage them from the world, ſo to ſmooth and plain the way, that they meet with no rubs to make them ſtumble. This is admirably repreſented to us by God's leading the children of Iſrael into the land of promiſe, whereof Moſes gives us this relation: *When Pharaoh had let the people go, God led them not through the way of the land of the Philiſtines, although that was near; for God ſaid, leſt peradventure the people repent when they ſee war, and they return to Egypt*, Exod. xiii. 17. The ſame Lord who took ſuch care to conduct the Iſraelites into the land of promiſe, after he had brought them out of Egypt, takes no leſs at preſent to bring thoſe to Heaven whom he is pleaſed to call to this happineſs, after having made them quit the world.

15. But I would have you to conceive, that though ſuch as have arrived to perfection in virtue, are careſſed after a particular manner, yet God is ſo good to young beginners that, conſidering their poverty, he helps them forward in the new way they have undertaken, and perceiving they are ſtill expoſed to temptations of ſin and have paſſions to overcome, he gives them, imperfect as they are, ſo much comfort, that their joy does not come very ſhort of that they poſſeſs, who are advanced much farther. This he does for no other end but to give them an entire victory over all their inordinate appetites, to make them break off with their own fleſh, to wean them from the milk, that is, from the weak delights of this world, and to tie them to him with ſuch ſtrong bonds of love, that they may never be able to break looſe. If this does not convince you, conſider what God has been pleaſed to ſignify

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to us by the feaſts of the Old Teſtament, where he commanded the firſt and laſt day to be obſerved with an equal ſolemnity. As for the ſix days which were between them, they were no more than the ordinary days of the week, but theſe two they always kept with a much greater veneration. What can this be but a figure of what we are now treating? He ordered the firſt day to be kept ſolemnly, as well as the laſt, to give us to underſtand that he makes much of thoſe that ſerve him in the beginning of their converſion, as well as of thoſe who are come to their utmoſt perfection. This he does in conſideration of what theſe have deſerved, and of what thoſe ſtand in need of, dealing with the one according to the rules of his juſtice, by giving them what their virtue has deſerved, and treating the other according to the dictates of his grace and mercy, by beſtowing on them much more than they have deſerved on account of their neceſſities.

16. We are never more taken with the ſight of trees, than when they are in their flouriſhing condition and the fruit upon them is ripe. The day of betrothing and the wedding-day are always devoted to mirth and jollity. God Almighty, upon the return of a ſoul to him, betroths her to himſelf, and when he marries her he is at all the charges of the wedding-feaſt, which he makes according to his eſtate and ability, not according to the deſerts and quality of his ſpouſe; and to that purpoſe he ſays, *Our ſiſter is but little, and ſhe hath no breaſts*, Cant. viii. 8. and therefore ſhe muſt live upon another's milk. The bride, ſpeaking to her bridegroom, tells him, *The young maidens have a love for thee*, Cant. i. 2. She does not ſay *the maidens*, which are thoſe ſouls that have made a conſiderable progreſs in virtue, but thoſe who are not of ſo ripe an age, that is, ſuch as have but juſt opened their eyes to this new light. Theſe, ſays ſhe, have an ardent love for thee. For young lovers do uſually expreſs their paſſion with the greateſt force and heat. This is what St. Thomas tells us, in one of his Opuſcula, where, amongſt ſeveral other reaſons, he alleges this, that the newneſs of the ſtate, of the love, of the light, and of the knowledge of divine things, diſcovers thoſe beauties to them which they never perceived before; filling them with a great deal of admiration, giving them at the ſame time a particular delight, and teaching them what returns they are to make him who has ſo kindly reſtored them their ſight, after they had been ſo long blindfolded and in the dark. When a man firſt comes into any great town or noble place, he walks up and down for ſome time, and is pleaſed with

with what he ſees; but, having ſatisfied his curioſity with the frequent ſight, he is leſs taken with it than he was before, nor does he admire it ſo much. Thus ſtands the caſe with thoſe who firſt come into this new country of grace, for they are ſurpriſed to find ſuch wonderful things. So that it is not to be admired, that young beginners in devotion ſhould feel more fervour in their ſouls than old practitioners; for the newneſs of the light and of their underſtanding Divine myſteries, cauſes a greater commotion in them. This, as St. Bernard remarks, Serm. 14. in Cant. is the reaſon why the prodigal ſon's elder brother was not in the wrong, when he complained to his father, and told him that for his ſo many years ſervice, without ever diſobeying the leaſt of his commands, he had never ſhewn him ſo much favour as he had done this extravagant lewd ſon of his at his return home. Thus new love, like new wine, ferments at firſt, and as water over a fire boils up as ſoon as it feels the heat it never felt before. The flame, after theſe firſt ſallies, grows more ſtrong and equal, though in the beginning it is more violent and impetuous.

17. God entertains thoſe that enter anew into his houſe with a great deal of kindneſs and love; he bears all their charges at firſt, and makes every thing ſeem light and eaſy; he deals with them as ſhop-keepers do with their cuſtomers, who give ſamples of their wares gratis, but will have their full price for what they ſell. The affection we ſhew little children is uſually more tender, though perhaps not greater, than what we ſhew thoſe who are of riper years. We carry thoſe up and down in our arms, but let theſe go by themſelves; and whilſt theſe are labouring and toiling, we lay thoſe to ſleep and let them take their reſt; without giving them the trouble of aſking for their meat, we feed them ourſelves, and put their victuals into their very mouths.

It is this kind reception new beginners find with God, and the manifeſt favours he ſhews them, which occaſion that ſpiritual joy and comfort the royal Prophet ſpeaks of: *The young plant ſhall flouriſh with thy drops*, Pſ. lxiv. 11. Now, what is this plant, and what theſe drops, but the dew of the Divine grace with which God waters theſe ſpiritual young plants, which he has lately dug up from amongſt the wild brambles of the world, and ſet in his own garden? Theſe are the plants which the Prophet means, when he ſays, *They ſhall rejoice in his drops*, Ibid. This ſhows how great the joy of ſuch perſons is at their firſt receiving of this new viſit. Nor are you to think

think that becauſe theſe favours are called but *drops*, they have no more in them than their name ſeems to promiſe; "For (as St. Auguſtine ſays) he that drinks of the river of Paradiſe, one drop of which is more than all the ocean, is ſure, though he drink but one ſingle drop, it will quench his thirſt for ever."

18. If, when you think of God, you are not ſenſible of theſe comforts, it is no argument at all againſt what has been ſaid. For if the palate, when it is out of taſte by any bad humour, cannot diſtinguiſh what is bitter from what is ſweet, but judges what is ſweet to be bitter; what wonder is it if your ſoul, corrupted with ſo many vices and irregular affections, and which longs ſo earneſtly after the fleſh-pots and onions of Egypt, ſhould not reliſh the manna of Heaven and the bread of angels. Waſh your mouth firſt clean with the tears of penance, and then you will be able *to taſte and ſee how ſweet the Lord is*, Pſ. xxxiii. 9.

What I have ſaid being ſo undeniably true, is there any pleaſure in the world to compare with theſe? Holy writers tells us there are two ſorts of happineſs; the one, a happineſs that is but begun; the other, complete and perfect; the latter the bleſſed above enjoy, and juſt men here on earth the former. What therefore can you deſire better than from this very moment to begin to be happy, and even in this life to receive the pledges of that divine marriage, which is to be conſummated perſonally in Heaven, though it be propoſed here but by proxy and at a diſtance? O mortal man! whoſoever you are, ſince it is in your own power to live in Paradiſe, and to enjoy ſuch a treaſure, go and ſell all you are worth, to purchaſe ſo great an eſtate for ſo ſmall a ſum. It is Jeſus Chriſt will ſell it, and he will let you have it, in a manner, for nothing. Do not defer the opportunity any longer, for every moment loſt is of more concern than all the riches of the world. And though you may perhaps meet with an occaſion of purchaſing it hereafter, aſſure yourſelf yet the time you ſhall have loſt will be a trouble to you, and will force you to cry out with tears, as did St. Auguſtine, "O ancient goodneſs, it is too late I have known thee," Solic. c. 31. The lateneſs of this glorious Saint's converſion, though he failed not of his crown, was the perpetual ſubject of his complaints and tears. Have a care, therefore, leſt it ſhould be your misfortune to deplore the loſs of both, if you ſhould be deprived of the benefits of glory, the inheritance of the ſaints in the next life, and of thoſe of grace, the reward of the juſt, in this.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the fifth Privilege of Virtue, viz. the Peace of Conſcience which the Juſt enjoy, and of the inward Remorſe that torments the Wicked.

1. BESIDES the joy proceeding from the conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, there is another attends the juſt, which is the teſtimony of a good conſcience. For the underſtanding of the nature and value of this privilege you are to conceive, that the Divine providence, which has furniſhed all creatures with as much as is neceſſary for their preſervation and perfection, being willing that the rational creature ſhould be moſt perfect, has ſupplied it with all that was requiſite for this purpoſe. And becauſe the perfection of this creature conſiſts in the perfection of its underſtanding and will, which are the two principal powers of the ſoul, the one made perfect by knowledge, and the other by virtue, therefore he created the principles of all ſciences, whence the concluſions flow, and the ſeed of all virtues in the ſoul, enduing it with a propenſion to good, and averſion to evil, which inclination is ſo natural and prevalent, that though a long habit of ill life may weaken, yet it can never totally deſtroy it. Thus we read that, amidſt all holy Job's misfortunes, there was always a ſervant eſcaped to bring him the news; even ſo he that ſins is never forſaken by that faithful ſervant, conſcience, who ſtill eſcapes alive and ſafe, to ſhow the wicked man what he loſt by ſin, and the miſerable eſtate he is reduced to.

2. This plainly demonſtrates how vigilant Divine providence is, and its love for virtue, ſince it has furniſhed us with a monitor that never ſleeps, a continual preacher that is never ſilent, and a maſter and tutor that never ceaſes guiding and directing us. Epictetus, the ſtoic, was very ſenſible hereof, when he ſaid, "That as fathers are wont to commit their young children to ſome careful tutor, that will diligently divert them from vice and lead them to virtue, ſo God, as our Father, after creating, put us into the hands of this natural virtue, called conſcience, as it were of a tutor, that it might ſtill put us forward in the way of goodneſs and check us in all wickedneſs."

3. Now this conſcience, as it is a maſter and tutor to the good, ſo is it an executioner and ſcourge to the wicked, inwardly puniſhing and accuſing them of the ills they do, and mix-

mixing ſuch bitterneſs among their delights, that they have no ſooner taſted the Egyptian onion but their eyes preſently begin to water. This is one of the puniſhments wherewith God threatens the wicked by the mouth of Iſaiah, ſaying, *He will deliver Babylon into the power of the hedgehog.* For God's juſtice delivers the heart of a wicked man, ſignified by Babylon, to the hedgehogs, that is, the devils, and to the pricks of conſcience that attend ſin, which, like ſharp thorns, pierce the heart. If you would know what theſe thorns are, one is the deformity and hideouſneſs of ſin, which is ſo abominable of itſelf that a philoſopher was wont to ſay, "If I knew the gods would forgive me, and men ſhould know nothing of it, yet I could not dare commit a ſin, becauſe of its own deformity." Another thorn is when the ſin is prejudicial to another, for then it appears like that blood of Abel ſpilt, which cried to God and craved revenge. Thus it is written in the firſt book of Maccabees, that king Antiochus had a full view of the miſchiefs he had done in Jeruſalem, which ſo afflicted him that they haſtened his death, and being ready to expire, he ſaid, *I remember the harms I did in Jeruſalem, where I ſeized ſuch treaſures of gold and ſilver, and deſtroyed the inhabitants of the city without reaſon, which I know to be the cauſe of all theſe torments I endure, and therefore I now die full of ſorrow in a ſtrange land.* Another thorn is, the ſhame that attends ſin, which the ſinner cannot be ignorant or inſenſible of, becauſe it is natural for man to deſire to be beloved, and to be troubled at being hated; for, as a wiſe man ſaid, "There is no greater torment in the world, than the public hatred." Another thorn is the inevitable fear of death, the continual uncertainty of life, the apprehenſion of the ſtrict account that muſt be given of every action, and the dreadful horror of eternal torments; for each of theſe things pricks and gores the ſinner's heart in ſuch a manner that he can never think of this death, ſo certain on one hand and ſo uncertain on the other, without being extremely concerned, as the book of Eccleſiaſticus ſays, becauſe he is ſenſible that day will take vengeance of all his crimes, and put an end to all his ſinful pleaſures. It is impoſſible for any man to put this thought out of his mind, becauſe there is nothing more natural to man than death is, and therefore the leaſt indiſpoſition fills him with a thouſand fears and doubts whether he ſhall die or no; for the exceſs of ſelf-love, added to ſo violent a paſſion as that of fear is, makes him afraid of every ſhadow, and puts him into a concern and apprehenſion, where there is not the leaſt ground for it; ſo that if

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any mortality ſhould happen, any earthquakes, or thunder and lightning, the ſinner is immediately diſturbed by his guilty conſcience, and fancies that God ſends all this to puniſh his iniquities.

4. All theſe thorns gore the wicked at once, as one of holy Job's friends declares at large, whoſe words I will add as a clearer proof of what I have aſſerted: *The wicked man*, ſays he, *ſpends his whole life in pride, notwithſtanding that he is uncertain how ſoon his tyranny may be put to an end, the noiſes of fear and terror are continually rattling in his ears*, Job xv. 20, 21, 22. which are nothing but the cries of his guilty conſcience, accuſing and correcting him every moment; and in the very midſt of peace, he is afraid of the ſnares and treacheries of his enemies; becauſe, let him live ever ſo quiet, his wicked conſcience never fails of putting him into continual apprehenſions. He cannot perſuade himſelf that he can poſſibly return from darkneſs to the light; that is to ſay, he does not believe there is any poſſibility of his getting out of the dreadful darkneſs he lives in, to enjoy the tranquillity of a good conſcience, which, like a comfortable and clear light, rejoices and enlightens the moſt ſecret parts of the ſoul; for which way ſoever he turns himſelf, he fancies he ſees a naked ſword pointed at him; ſo that, even whilſt he is at table, which is, generally ſpeaking, a place of mirth and joy, he is wrecked with all kinds of fears, diſtruſts and jealouſies, *and imagines he is juſt beginning the day of darkneſs*, ver. 23. that is, the day of death and judgment, and in which his laſt ſentence is to be paſſed upon him. *He ſhall be frightened with tribulation, and ſurrounded on all ſides with miſery, as a king is with his guards, when he is going into the field of battle*, ver. 24. This is the deſcription which Job's friend gives of the dreadful torments thoſe unhappy wretches ſuffer within; for, to make uſe of the ſaying of a philoſopher, "God by his eternal law has ordained that fear ſhould be the conſtant companion of the wicked;" which agrees very well with a ſentence of Solomon, who ſays, *That the wicked flies when no body purſues him, but the juſt man is as bold as a lion*, Prov. xxviii. 1. St. Auguſtine has the ſame thing, in ſhort, when he ſays, "Thou, O Lord, haſt commanded, that every ſoul that is irregular, ſhould be its own executioner, and we find that it is ſo." St. Aug. L. 1. Conf. c. 12. There is nothing in nature that does not convince us of this truth; for can you tell me of any thing in the whole world which is not diſturbed when out of its order? what a ſenſible pain a man feels if he has but a bone out of joint? what a violence does the element ſuffer which

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is out of its center, and what ſickneſs does not follow when the humours of our bodies are out of their due proportion and temperament? Since therefore it is ſo natural to a rational creature to live a regular orderly life, how can its nature chuſe but ſuffer and be uneaſy when life is irregular and contrary to reaſon. Job had a great deal of reaſon to ſay, *Was there ever any man that reſiſted God, and yet lived in peace?* Job ix. 4. Upon which words St. Gregory ſays, "That the order in which God has diſpoſed of all things for the continuing and preſerving of them in their being, is no leſs the matter of our admiration than the power with which he has created them." St. Greg. Moral. L. 9. c. 12. Whence it follows that nobody can diſturb the order of the Creator, without breaking that peace which he has intended ſhould be the effect of this order; becauſe it is impoſſible for any thing to be at reſt when it is out of the place where God had put it. And thus we ſee that thoſe things which were undiſturbed, whilſt they ſubmitted to the order of God, no ſooner break off from this ſubjection than they loſe the peace they enjoyed before. We have an example hereof in our firſt parents and the fallen angels, who, as ſoon as ever they diſobeyed the will of God to follow their own, and went out of the order he had put them in, were deprived of their former happineſs, and loſt that content they had before. And man who, whilſt he continued obedient, was abſolute over himſelf, when he caſt off that obedience, found a war and rebellion within himſelf.

6. This is the torment the wicked, by God's juſt judgment, are perpetually racked with, and one of the greateſt miſeries they can ſuffer in this life, according to the opinions of all the ſaints, amongſt whom St. Ambroſe, in his Book of Offices, aſks, "Is there any greater torment in the world than the inward remorſe of a man's own conſcience? Is it not a miſery we ought to fly more than death itſelf, or the loſs of our eſtates, our health, or our liberty." L. 3. c. 4. And St. Iſidore tells us, "There is nothing in nature which man cannot fly from, but himſelf; for let him run where he will, he will ſtill carry the ſting of his own wicked conſcience, along with him." St. Iſid. in ſent. L. 2. c. 36. The ſame Saint ſays in another place, "The greateſt puniſhment that can be inflicted, is that of an evil conſcience; if therefore you deſire to live in peace, follow virtue and piety." Idem. L. 2. Synom. c. 36. This is ſo undeniable a truth, that the very Heathen philoſophers themſelves acknowledged it, though they neither knew nor believed any thing of thoſe pains which our faith teaches us the wicked

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are to ſuffer; and therefore Seneca aſks, "What avails it to fly from the converſation of others? A good conſcience calls all the world in to witneſs for it, whilſt a bad one is always tormented, though in the midſt of a deſert. If what you do be good, you need not be aſhamed to let the whole world know it; but if, on the contrary, it be bad, what matter is it whether any body knows it or not, as long as you know it yourſelf? Your condition will be miſerable if you take no notice of ſuch an evidence, ſince every man's own conſcience is as good as a thouſand witneſſes." Sen. Epiſt. 97. The ſame author tells us in another place, "That the ſevereſt puniſhment which can be inflicted for any crime, is the very committing of it." Epiſt. 98. And he repeats the ſame elſewhere, ſaying, "If you have been guilty of any crime, you ought not to fear any witneſs that can come in againſt you ſo much as your own ſelf, becauſe you may find out ſome means or other to fly from every body elſe, but you will never be able to fly from yourſelf, for every wicked action you do is its own executioner." Epiſt. 45. Cicero has ſomething to the ſame purpoſe, in one of his Orations, where he ſays, "There is no body ſo able as a man's own conſcience is, either to caſt or to acquit him; and therefore an innocent man is never afraid, whilſt the guilty lives always in apprehenſions." St. Inſid. in ſent. L. 2. c. 36. This therefore is one of thoſe torments which the wicked are never free from; it begins in this life, and will remain for all eternity in the next; it is the never-dying worm, as Iſaiah lxvi. 24. calls it, that ſhall never ceaſe to gnaw the conſciences of the wicked. And it is in this ſenſe St. Iſidore interprets thoſe words of the Pſalmiſt, Pſ. xli. 8. "One abyſs calls upon another; that is," ſays he, "the wicked ſhall be carried from the ſentence which their own conſciences paſs againſt them, to that of eternal damnation." St. Iſid. in ſent. L. 2. c. 26.

SECTION I.

Of the Peace of Conſcience which the Virtuous enjoy.

Virtuous men are free from this plague, becauſe they are never tormented with the ſtings of a bad conſcience, but, on the contrary, enjoy the comforts they receive from the ſweet fruits of virtue, which the Holy Ghoſt has planted in their ſouls, as in an earthly paradiſe and a private garden, in which he delights. So St. Auguſtine terms it, in his book upon Geneſis, where he ſays, "The joy a good conſcience gives a virtuous

virtuous man is a true paradiſe," Tom. 3. Lib. 12. de Gen. ad lit. c. 34. And this is the reaſon why the church is called a paradiſe full of all kinds of graces and innocent pleaſures for thoſe that live juſtly, piouſly, and temperately. And the ſame Saint, in his Method of Inſtructing the Ignorant, has theſe words: "You who ſeek after that true peace which is promiſed to Chriſtians after their death, aſſure yourſelf that it is to be found amongſt the bitter troubles and pains of this life, if you will but love him that has made you this promiſe, and will keep his commandments; for you will ſoon find, by your own experience, that the fruits of juſtice are much ſweeter than thoſe of iniquity; and you will meet with a much more ſolid ſatisfaction from a good conſcience, amidſt all your afflictions and tribulations, than a bad conſcience would ever let you take, though in the very midſt of delights and pleaſures." Lib. de Catech. rud. Hitherto the words of the Saint, which give us to underſtand that this comfort is of the nature of honey, which is not only ſweet itſelf, but makes thoſe things ſo, though of themſelves unſavoury that it is mixed with, ſo a good conſcience brings ſo much peace along with it that it makes the moſt painful life ſweet and eaſy. And, as we have ſaid, that the foulneſs and enormity of ſin are of themſelves a torment to the wicked, ſo, on the contrary, the beauty and worth of virtue, without any thing elſe, are a comfort to the good: it is what the holy Prophet David expreſly teaches us, when he ſays, *The judgment of the Lord* (that is, his holy commandments) *are true, and juſtify themſelves. They are to be deſired more than gold and precious ſtones, and are ſweeter than honey and the honey-comb*, Pſ. xviii. 10, 11. This holy Prophet, who had taſted how ſweet they were, took no greater pleaſure in any thing than in the obſervance of them, as he tells us himſelf in another Pſalm, where he ſays, *I have taken pleaſure in the way of your commandments, as if they had been the greateſt riches in the world*, Pſ. cxviii. 14. His ſon Solomon, in his Book of Proverbs, is of the ſame opinion; for he ſays, *It is a pleaſure to a juſt man to do juſtice*, Prov. xxi. 15. that is, to act virtuouſly and to do his duty. Though there are ſeveral cauſes for this joy, yet it proceeds chiefly from the bare ſplendour and brightneſs of virtue, which, according to Plato, is moſt incomparably fair and beautiful. In fine, the advantages and delights which a good conſcience brings are ſuch, that St. Ambroſe, in his Book of Offices, makes the happineſs of the juſt in this life depend upon it; and therefore he ſays, "The brightneſs of virtue is ſo great, that the

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peace of conſcience and the aſſurance of our own innocence are enough to make our lives pleaſant and happy." St. Amb. L. 2. de Off. c. 1.

The ancient philoſophers were no leſs acquainted, by the bare light of nature, with the comfort that proceeds from a good conſcience, than they were with the diſturbances which attend a bad one; as we may ſee by Cicero, who, in his Tuſculan Queſtions, ſays thus: "The life which is ſpent in actions of honour and virtue, is accompanied with ſo much ſatisfaction and pleaſure, that they who paſs away their time thus, either never feel any trouble at all, or if they do, it is very light and inſignificant." L. 3. Tuſcus. He repeats almoſt the ſame thing in another place, and ſays, "That virtue can find no theatre, either more public or more honourable, than the teſtimony of a good conſcience." Id. ibid. Socrates being aſked, Who could live free from paſſion, immediately made anſwer, "That a virtuous man." And Bias, another famous philoſopher, being aſked, Who, in this world, was free from fears and apprehenſions, anſwered, "That a good conſcience." Seneca, in one of his Epiſtles, writes thus: "A wiſe man is always cheerful, and his cheerfulneſs comes from a good conſcience." Epiſt. 23. So that you ſee how theſe philoſophers were of the ſame opinion in this matter with Solomon, who ſays, *All the days of a poor man are evil*; that is to ſay, tedious and troubleſome; *but a ſecure mind is a perpetual feaſt*, Prov. xv. 15. It is impoſſible for a man to ſay more in a few words; by which we are to underſtand that, as he who is invited to a feaſt is pleaſed with the variety of diſhes, and with the company of his friends that are invited, ſo the juſt man is delighted with the teſtimony of a good conſcience, and with the ſweetneſs of the Divine preſence, having ſuch good ground to believe that God is in his ſoul. But yet there is this difference between theſe delights, that the pleaſure a man has in a feaſt is but earthly, ſhort and beſtial, whereas this other is heavenly, eternal and noble. The one begins with hunger, and ends with diſtaſte and loathing; but the other begins with a virtuous life, is preſerved and continued by perſeverance, and ends with eternal honour and glory. Now if the philoſopher, who had no hopes at all of any reward after his life, had ſuch an eſteem for the pleaſure which a good conſcience gives, at what rate ought a Chriſtian to value it, who knows very well what rewards God has prepared for him in the next life, and with what favours he honours him even in this? And though this aſſurance ought not to be quite void of

of a holy and a religious fear, yet this is ſuch a fear as does not diſmay, but rather ſtrengthens him that has it, after a wonderful manner; becauſe it tells him inwardly, that his confidence is then more ſecure and profitable when it is tempered with and kept in by this wholeſome fear, and that if he had no fear at all, it would no longer be a confidence, but a falſe ſecurity and preſumption.

9. You ſee here another new privilege which the virtuous enjoy, and which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, when he ſays, *Our glory is the teſtimony of our conſcience*, that we have lived in ſimplicity of heart and in a true ſincerity, not according to the wiſdom of the world, 2 Cor. i. 12.

This is almoſt all that is to be ſaid of the greatneſs of this privilege; but neither what I have ſaid, nor what I am able to ſay, can diſcover its excellency to him that has never had any experience of it; for how can any one explain the deliciouſneſs of a meat to one that has never taſted it? This joy is, in effect, ſo great that very often, when a virtuous man is afflicted and can find no eaſe which way ſoever he caſts his eyes, yet if he but reflect upon himſelf, he is immediately comforted with the conſideration of the peace and quiet he finds in his own conſcience. For he knows that, as for all the reſt, let it go which way it will, it is no matter to him; this is the only thing he has to look after. And though, as I have ſaid already, he cannot have an evident knowledge of his innocence, nevertheleſs, as the ſun in a morning enlightens the world before we ſee it, by its advance towards us, ſo the teſtimony which a good conſcience gives a juſt man, is a comfort to his ſoul, though this knowledge is not abſolutely clear and evident. This is ſo true, that St. Chryſoſtom, ſpeaking of the ſame thing, ſays, "Let a man be ever ſo melancholy, if he have but a good conſcience all his trouble vaniſhes like a ſpark of fire that is extinguiſhed when it falls into a great river." Hom. 10. in 2. ad Corinth. c. 3. & Hon. 54. in Matt. c. 16.

CHAP. VII.

Of the ſixth Privilege of Virtue, viz. the Hopes the Juſt have in God's Mercy, and of the vain Confidence of the Wicked.

1. THE comfort of a good conſcience is always accompanied with that particular hope virtuous men live in: of

which the Apoſtle ſays, *That they comfort themſelves up with hopes, and are patient in their tribulations*, Rom. xii. 12. adviſing us to make our hope the ſubject of our joy, and in virtue of the ſame, to ſuffer with patience whatever croſſes may happen, aſſuring us that God himſelf is our aſſiſtance and the reward of our ſuffering. This is one of the greateſt treaſures of a Chriſtian life; theſe are the riches, this the inheritance of the children of God; it is the common haven againſt all the ſtorms of this life, and the beſt remedy we have againſt all our miſeries.

2. But not to deceive ourſelves, we muſt obſerve here, that as there are two ſorts of faith, the one a dead faith, which performs no actions of life, and is that which bad Chriſtians have; the other a lively one, the effect of charity, by which the juſt perform the actions of life; ſo there are two ſorts of hope, the one a dead hope, which neither enlivens the ſoul, nor aſſiſts her in her operations, nor comforts her in her troubles; ſuch a hope as the wicked have; the other is a *lively hope*, as St. Peter calls it, 1 Pet. i. 3. becauſe it produces the effects of life, as thoſe things do which have life in them, that is, becauſe it encourages, enlivens and ſtrengthens us in our way to Heaven, and gives us breath and confidence amidſt all the dangers and troubles of this world. Such a hope as this the chaſte Suſanna had, of whom we read, Dan. xiii. 42, 43. that after ſhe was condemned to die, and as they were leading her through the ſtreets to be ſtoned to death, yet her heart truſted and confided in God. David had ſuch a confidence, when he ſaid, *Be mindful, O Lord, of the promiſe which thou madeſt to thy ſervant, by which thou haſt given me great hopes. It is thee that has been my comfort in my affliction, becauſe thy word has enlivened me*, Pſ. cxviii. 49, 50.

3 This hope works many and very wonderful effects in the ſoul of thoſe who are filled with it, and that in a greater meaſure, by how much the more it partakes of charity and the love of God, which gives it life. The firſt of theſe effects is to encourage man to continue in the way of virtue, in hopes of the reward he is to receive; for, as all the ſaints teſtify, the ſurer man is of his reward, the more willing he is to run through all the miſeries of this world. St. Gregory ſays, "Hope is ſo ſtrong, as to be able to lift up our hearts to the joys of Heaven, and to make us quite inſenſible to the miſeries of this mortal life." Moral L. 16. Cap. 13. Origen ſays, "The hope of future glory gives thoſe perſons much eaſe who are toiling in this life for the obtaining of it, as we ſee the

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hopes of victory and of a reward mitigates the pains of the wounds the ſoldier receives in war." St. Ambroſe ſays, "An aſſured hope of reward makes toil ſeem leſs, and leſſens the apprehenſion of dangers." St. Ambr. in Pſal. 12. St. Jerom ſays, "Any labour ſeems light and eaſy when we put a value upon the reward, becauſe the hopes of what we are to receive makes us think there is no trouble in what we have undertaken," Epiſt. ad Demetri. c. 9. St. Chryſoſtom is much fuller upon this matter. "If (ſays he) a tempeſtuous ſea is not able to frighten ſeamen, if the hard froſts and violent rains of winter are no diſcouragements to the huſbandman, if neither wounds nor death itſelf can daunt the ſoldier, and if neither falls nor blows can diſhearten the wreſtler, whilſt they think of the deceitful hopes of what they propoſe to themſelves, for the reward of their toils and labours; how much leſs ought they, who aſpire to the kingdom of Heaven, to take any notice of the difficulties they may meet with in their journey thither. Therefore, O Chriſtian, conſider not that the way of virtue is rugged and uneven, but reflect upon what it will lead you to; and do not, on the contrary, falſely perſuade yourſelf that the path of vice is ſmooth and pleaſant, but think of the precipice it will bring you to." St. Chryſt. Hom. 18. in Geneſ. O how true is every word this great ſaint ſpeaks! for will any man be ſo mad as willingly to follow a path that is ſtrewed with flowers, if he is to die when he comes to the end of it? And who is there that will refuſe to take another that is rugged and uneaſy, if it leads to life and happineſs?

4. Nor does this hope ſerve only for the attaining of ſo happy an end, but aſſiſts us in the means that tend to it, and in bearing with the miſeries and neceſſities of all this life. For it is this that ſupports a man in tribulation, that defends him in danger, that comforts him in afflictions, that aſſiſts him in ſickneſs, and ſupplies all his neceſſities and wants, becauſe it is by the means of this virtue that he obtains mercy from God, who helps us upon all occaſions. We have evident proofs of this throughout the holy ſcripture, but particularly in the Pſalms; ſo that there is ſcarce any one of them wherein the royal Prophet does not highly commend this virtue, and ſpeak of the wonderful effects and advantages of it, as being without doubt one of the greateſt treaſures and comforts the virtuous can poſſibly enjoy in this life. To prove this, I will make uſe of a few paſſages of the ſcriptures, but ſhall be forced to paſs by many more than I can be able to quote. The prophet Hanani tells king Aſa,

the eyes of the Lord contemplate the whole earth, and ſtrengthen thoſe that rely entirely upon him, 2 Paral. xvi. 9. The prophet Jeremy ſays, *The Lord is good to thoſe that hope in him, and to the ſoul that ſeeks after him*, Thren. iii. 25. And in another place it is ſaid, *that the Lord is good, he ſtrengthens his ſervants in the day of tribulation, and knows all thoſe that hope in him*, Nahum i. 7. that is, he takes care to relieve and aſſiſt them. Iſaiah ſays, *If you will return to me and reſt in me, you ſhall be ſafe; your ſtrength ſhall be in ſilence and hope*, Iſa. xxx. 15. By *ſilence* is to be underſtood here, the inward reſt which the ſoul enjoys amidſt all her troubles: now this reſt is nothing elſe but the particular effect of this hope which baniſhes all kind of ſolicitude and immoderate trouble, by the favour it expects from the mercy of God. The book of Eccleſiaſticus ſays, ii. 8, 9, 11. *You who fear the Lord, put your truſt in him, and you ſhall not loſe your reward. You who fear the Lord, hope in him, and his mercy will be your delight and comfort. Conſider, O ye children, all the nations of the world, and know that no body ever yet hoped in the Lord and has been confounded.* Solomon's advice to us, in his Proverbs is this: *In all your ways think of the Lord, and he will direct all your ſteps*, Prov. iii. 6. The prophet David ſays, in one of his Pſalms, *Let thoſe who know thy name, O Lord, hope in thee, becauſe thou haſt never forſaken thoſe that ſeek thee*, Pſ. ix. 11. And in another Pſalm he ſays, *I have put my hope, O Lord, in thee, and therefore I will be glad and rejoice in thy Mercy*, Pſ. xxx. 8. And in another place he ſays, *mercy ſhall ſurround him that puts his truſt in the Lord*, Pſ. xxxi. 10. He has much reaſon to ſay, *ſhall ſurround*, to let us know that he ſhall be ſurrounded on all ſides with this mercy, as a king is with his guards, for the ſecurity of his perſon. He handles this ſubject more at large in another Pſalm, where he ſays, *expecting I have expected the Lord, and he has taken notice of me. And he has heard my prayers, and has brought me out of the Lake of miſery, and out of the mud which I ſtuck in. And he has ſet my feet upon a firm rock, and has directed me in my way. And has put a new ſong into my mouth, and a hymn in praiſe of our God. Many ſhall ſee this and ſhall fear the Lord, and put their confidence in him. Happy is the man whoſe hope is in the name of the Lord, and who has turnd his eyes from vanities and deceitful follies*, Pſ. xxxix. 1. —— 7. From theſe words you may learn another extraordinary effect of this virtue, which is to open a man's mouth and eyes that he may be ſenſible, by his own experience, of the fatherly-tenderneſs of God, and may ſing a new ſong, with a new delight, for the new favour he has received, to wit, the aſſiſtance he hoped for. If we were to

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cite all the verſes in the Pſalms, nay, and all the entire Pſalms that treat of this ſubject, we ſhould never have done; for the whole Pſalm which begins, *Qui confidunt in Domino ſicut Mons Sion, They who truſt in the Lord, are like Mount Sion*, is to this purpoſe, Pſ. cxxiv. Heb. cxxv. And ſo is the Pſalm which begins, *Qui habitat in adjutorio Altiſſimi, He who dwells in the ſecret place of the Moſt High*, Pſ. xc. Heb. xci. They neither of them ſpeak of any thing elſe but the extraordinary advantages of thoſe who put their truſt in God and live under his protection. For this reaſon St. Bernard, writing upon theſe words of the Pſalm, *O Lord, thou art my refuge*, ſpeaks thus: 'Whatever I am to do, or whatever I am to omit, whatever I am to ſuffer, or whatever I am to deſire, you, O Lord, are my hope. 'Tis this hope that makes you perform every thing you have promiſed, and it is you that are the chief cauſe of this hope of mine. Let another allege the good works he has done, and pleaſe himſelf with having undergone all the heat and burden of the day. Let him ſay with the Phariſee, that he has faſted twice a week, and that he is not as other men are; I, for my part, will cry out with the Prophet, *It is good for me to cleave to the Lord, and to put my truſt in God*, Pſ. lxxii. 98. If any one promiſes me a reward, it is by your mercy alone that I ſhall hope to obtain it; if any body ſhould make war againſt me, my hopes of overcoming ſhall be in you. Should the world ſet upon me, ſhould the devil roar at me, ſhould the fleſh rebel againſt the ſpirit, I will hope in none but you. Since therefore the Lord is the only one that is able to aſſiſt us, why do not we immediately baniſh out of our hearts all theſe vain and deceitful hopes? And why do not we, with fervour and devotion, ſtick to ſo ſecure a hope as this is?' The Saint immediately after has theſe words: 'Faith ſays, God has laid up ineſtimable benefits for thoſe that ſerve him faithfully; but Hope ſays, it is for me that he keeps them; and as if this were not enough, Charity cries out, I will make haſte and take poſſeſſion of them.' S. Bern. Serm. 9. Pſalm 90. v. 2.

5. Behold how advantageous this virtue is, and how neceſſary upon ſeveral occaſions. It is like a ſecure haven which the juſt put in at in bad weather; it is like a ſtrong ſhield to keep off the attempts of the world; it is like a magazine of corn in time of famine, whither the poor reſort to relieve their wants; it is the tent and ſhade which God promiſes his elect, by the prophet Iſaiah, to ſhelter them from the burning heats of ſummer, and from the ſtorms and tempeſts of winter; that is, from the proſperity and adverſity of this world. To conclude,

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it is an univerſal remedy for all our evils, becauſe it is certain that whatſoever we hope with juſtice, faith and prudence to receive from God, we ſhall not fail of obtaining it, provided it is for our own good. For which reaſon St. Cyprian ſays, "that God's mercy is a fountain of healing waters, that hope is a veſſel to receive them, and that the cure will be proportioned to the largeneſs of the veſſel; for if we conſider the fountain, it is impoſſible it ſhould be ever dryed up." So that as God himſelf told the children of Iſrael, Joſu. i. 3. that whatever place they did but ſo much as ſet their feet upon, it ſhould be theirs; ſo as much mercy as a man ſhall put his confidence in, ſhall be his own. So that, according to this, he who, inſpired by God, ſhall hope for all things, ſhall accordingly obtain all things. Thus this hope ſeems to be a reſemblance of the Divine virtue and power which redounds to the honour of God. For, (as St. Bernard very well obſerves,) 'nothing ſo much diſcovers the omnipotence of God as that we ſee he is not only Almighty himſelf, but that he in ſome manner makes all thoſe ſo who hope in him.' Serm. 85. in Cant. Did not Joſhua partake of that omnipotence, who from the earth commanded the ſun to ſtand ſtill in the firmament? Joſu. x. 13. Nor was his power leſs, who bid King Ezechias chooſe which he would, either to have the ſun go back, or advance ſo many degrees, 4 Reg. xx. 9. 11. Iſa. xxxviii. 8. It is his giving his ſervant ſuch power as this that promotes the greatneſs of his glory in a particular manner: For if Nabuchodonoſor, that great king of the Aſſyrians, valued himſelf upon having ſo many princes to obey and ſerve him, that were kings as well as he, how much more reaſon has God Almighty to glorify himſelf, and ſay, that thoſe who ſerve him are in ſome meaſure Gods, in reſpect he communicates ſo much of his power to them.

SECTION

Of the vain Hopes of the Wicked.

6. You ſee here what a vaſt treaſure the virtuous enjoy, whilſt the wicked have no benefit of it; becauſe though they have not entirely loſt all hope, yet what they have is only a dead one; becauſe it is deprived of its life, ſo that it cannot work any of thoſe effects on them which we have ſpoken of. For as nothing enlivens hope ſo much as a good conſcience, ſo nothing ruins it more than a bad one, becauſe it generally walks in dread and fear, as being ſenſible how unworthy it is of God Almighty's grace. So that diſtruſt and fear are the inſepara-

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ble companions of a bad conſcience, as the ſhadow is of the body. By which it appears that ſuch as man's happineſs, ſuch is his confidence; for as he places his happineſs in worldly treaſures, ſo his truſt is in them, becauſe all his glory is in them, and it is to them he has recourſe in time of affliction. The book of wiſdom takes notice of this kind of hope; where it is ſaid, *that the hope of the wicked is like a flock of wool, which is blown away by the wind, and like a light foam which is ſcattered by the waves, and like a cloud of ſmoak which vaniſhes in the air*, ch. v. 15. Judge by this how vain ſuch a hope muſt be.

7. Nor is this all; for it is not only an unprofitable but a prejudicial and deceitful hope, as God himſelf has declared to us by the prophet Iſaiah, ſaying, *Wo to you children that have forſaken your father, who have taken counſel, but not of me, who have begun a web, but not in my ſpirit, that you might add ſin to ſin. You have ſent into Egypt for help without conſulting me, expecting help from Pharaoh's forces, and putting your truſt in the protection of Egypt. But Pharaoh's ſtrength ſhall turn to your confuſion, and the truſt which you placed in Egypt's protection ſhall be to your diſgrace. All thoſe that have truſted in the people have been confounded, becauſe they could neither help them nor do them any good; on the contrary, they have put them to greater ſhame and confuſion*, Iſa. xxxi 1, 3. Theſe are the prophet's own words, who not thinking that he has ſaid enough yet, continues in the next chapter to make the ſame reproach to them again, ſaying, *Wo to thoſe that go down for help into Egypt, placing their truſt in their horſes, and confiding in their chariots, becauſe they are many, and in their horſes, becauſe they are very ſtrong, who have not their hope in the Holy of Iſrael, nor ſought after the Lord. For the Egyptian is a man and no God, and their horſes are fleſh and not ſpirit; and the Lord will ſtretch out his hand, and both he that aſſiſts and he that aſſiſted ſhall fall, and they ſhall be all deſtroyed together*, Iſa. xxxi. 1, 3.

8. See here the difference there is between the hope of the juſt and that of the wicked, for the hope of the wicked have is the fleſh, but the ſpirit that of the juſt. Or, if this does not thoroughly expreſs it, man is the hope of the wicked, whilſt the hope of the juſt is God: by which it appears, that there is the ſame difference between theſe two hopes that there is between God and man. It is upon this account that the Pſalmiſt, with a great deal of reaſon, adviſes us to beware of the one, and invites us to the other, with theſe words: *Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſons of men, in whom there is no ſalvation. Their life ſhall have an end, and they ſhall return to the earth out of which they have been created, and then all their deſigns ſhall periſh.*

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Happy is the man who has the God of Jacob for to help him, and whoſe hope is in the Lord his God, who created heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that is in them, Pſ. cxlv. 3, 4, 5. Here you plainly ſee how different theſe two hopes are. The ſame Prophet expreſſes it again, in another Pſalm, where he ſays, *Our enemies have relied upon their chariots and their horſes, but as for us we will call upon the name of the Lord our God. They have been taken and are fallen, but we have riſen and ſtand upright,* Pſ. xix. 8, 9. Conſider now how the effects of their hopes are proportioned to what they are founded upon, ſince ruin and deſtruction are the conſequences of the one, and victory and honour of the other.

9. For this reaſon thoſe that rely upon the firſt of theſe hopes are rightly compared to the man in the goſpel, that built his houſe upon the ſand, which was beat down by the firſt ſtorm that aroſe; but they who rely on the other are like him that built his houſe upon a firm rock, ſo that neither winds nor waves, nor any tempeſts whatever were able to ſhake it, Matt vii. 24, 25, 26, 27. The prophet Jeremy explains this ſame difference, by a very proper compariſon: *Curſed be the man that puts his confidence in man, and withdrawing his heart from the Lord makes fleſh his defence and ſecurity. For he ſhall be like the ſhrubs in the wilderneſs, and ſhall not ſee any thing that is good even when it comes. But he ſhall live in the deſert, in a dry ground, in an unwholeſome and unhabitable ſoil,* Jer. xvii. 5, 6. But ſpeaking immediately after of the juſt, he ſays, *Bleſſed is the man that truſts in the Lord, becauſe the Lord will be his protector. He ſhall be like a tree that is planted upon the river ſide, which ſhall ſpread out its root by the virtue of the neighbouring waters; and he ſhall not be afraid of the ſcorching heats of ſummer, and his leaves ſhall be always green, and he ſhall not be in any apprehenſion in the time of drought, nor ſhall he ever fail to bear fruit,* Ibid. ver. 7, 8. Now what more need be ſaid, were men in their right ſenſes, to ſhow how different the condition of the virtuous is from that of the wicked, and how much more happy they are than theſe, upon the bare account of hope itſelf. Is it poſſible for a tree to flouriſh better in any place than in ſuch a one as the Prophet has here repreſented? It fares exactly after the ſame manner with a virtuous man, for there is nothing imaginable but what goes well with him, becauſe he is planted near the ſtreams of the waters of Divine grace. But, on the other hand, it is impoſſible for a tree to be in a worſe condition than to branch all out into wood, and to bear no fruit, becauſe of its being ſet a in bad ground, and in a place where

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no body can come to lop it. This may convince the wicked that it is their greateſt miſery to turn away their eyes and hearts from God, who is the fountain of living waters, to fix them upon the creatures, and to rely upon their aſſiſtance, who are themſelves ſo weak and ſo deceitful, and may be truly called *a dry, barren and uninhabitable land.* By this you may ſee how much the world deſerves our tears, being planted in ſo bad a ſoil, as having placed its hope in things that are ſo unable to aſſiſt it, if that may be called a hope which is in itſelf ſo far from being ſo, that it is, on the contrary, nothing but deceit and confuſion.

10. What miſery is to be compared with this? Can there be any greater poverty than to live without this hope? For if ſin has reduced man to ſuch a low condition, that he can find no relief but from the hope he has in God's mercy, what will become of him if this anchor, which is the only ſupport left him, ſhould fail? We ſee all other creatures are in their way perfect at their birth, and provided with all things neceſſary for the preſervation of their being. Man, on the contrary, by reaſon of ſin, comes in ſuch an imperfect manner into the world that he has ſcarce any thing in himſelf that he ſtands in need of, but requires every thing ſhould be brought to him, and lives upon the alms which God Almighty's mercy diſtributes. If therefore he were deſtitute of this means, what kind of life would his be but an imperfect and defective one, ſubject to a thouſand miſeries and wants? What is it elſe but to live without hope, to live without God? What therefore has man left him of his ancient patrimony to live upon, if this ſupport be taken from him? Is there any nation in the world ſo barbarous as not to have ſome knowledge of a God, as not to pay ſome kind of honour and worſhip to him, or to hope for ſome favour from his providential care? When Moſes had been abſent but for a little while from the children of Iſrael, they imagined they were without their God; and being as yet very raw and ignorant, they immediately cried out to Aaron to make them a god, becauſe they were afraid to go on any farther without one. By which it appears that man is taught by nature that there muſt of neceſſity be a God, though he is not always ſo happy as to know the true, and that he is ſenſible of his own weakneſs, though he is at the ſame time ignorant of the cauſe of it, and therefore runs naturally to God for a remedy againſt it. So that, as the ivy ſeeks ſome tree to ſupport it, that ſo it may creep upward, not being able to ſupport itſelf, and as woman naturally has

recourſe

recourſe to the aſſiſtance and protection of man, her own imperfection telling her ſhe wants his help, ſo human nature, being reduced to the utmoſt extremity, ſeeks after God to defend and protect her. And ſince nothing is more evident than this, what kind of life muſt thoſe men live who are unhappily neglected and forſaken by God?

11. I would willingly know of thoſe who are in ſuch a condition, who it is that comforts them in their afflictions? to whom they have recourſe in dangers? who looks after them when they are ſick? to whom they can diſcover their ailments? whom they conſult in their difficult affairs? with whom they hold a correſpondence, with whom they converſe, and whom they deſire to aſſiſt them in all their neceſſities? with whom they diſcourſe, lie down and riſe? In ſhort, how can they, who are deprived of this help, get out of the confuſion and diſturbances of this life? If a body cannot live without a ſoul, how is it poſſible for a ſoul to live without God, who is as abſolutely neceſſary for preſerving of the life of the ſoul, as the ſoul is for preſerving that of the body? And if, as we have ſaid before, a lively hope is the anchor of our life, what man will be ſo raſh as to venture out into the ſtormy ſea of this world, without carrying this anchor along with him? If hope is the ſhield with which we are to defend ourſelves againſt our enemies, how can men dare go without that ſhield into the very midſt of ſo many foes? If hope is the ſtaff that has ſupported human nature ever ſince the general diſtemper wherewith our firſt parents infected it, where will feeble and impotent man be if he has not this ſtaff to keep him up?

12. We have here ſufficiently explained the difference there is between the hope of the good and that of the bad, and conſequently between the condition of the one and the other? for the one has God to protect and defend him, whilſt the other puts his truſt in the ſtaff of Egypt, which, if he venture to lean upon, will break and run into his hand: becauſe the very ſin man commits in placing his confidence there is enough to make God let him know, by his own fall, how fooliſhly he has deceived himſelf; as he has declared by the Prophet Jeremy, who, foretelling the deſtruction of the kingdom of Moab, and the occaſion of it, uſes theſe words: *Becauſe you have put your truſt in your fortifications and in your riches, you yourſelf ſhall be taken; and Chamos,* (which is the god in which you have truſted) *ſhall be carried into captivity, with his prieſts, and with his princes,* Jerem. xliv. 7. Conſider now what a kind

kind of ſuccour this muſt be, ſince the very ſeeking and truſting in it is certain ruin and deſtruction.

This ſhall ſuffice to ſhew how great a privilege this of hope is; and though it may ſeem to be the ſame with the particular providence we have treated of already, which God extends towards thoſe that ſerve and love him, there is yet as much difference between them as is between the effect and its cauſe. For though there are ſeveral cauſes and beginnings of this hope, as the goodneſs and verity of God, the merits of our Saviour, and the reſt, however his paternal Providence, from which this confidence proceeds, is one of the chiefeſt, becauſe the knowledge that God has ſuch particular care over him, is the cauſe of this confidence in man.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the ſeventh Privilege of Virtue, viz. *the true Liberty which the Virtuous enjoy, and of the miſerable and unaccountable Slavery the Wicked live in.*

1. FROM all the above-mentioned privileges, but particularly from the ſecond and fourth, which are the grace of the Holy Ghoſt and the Divine conſolations, there ariſes another extraordinary one which virtuous men enjoy, and is the true liberty of the ſoul; it is what the Son of God brought into the world with him; and it is upon this account, that he is called the *Redeemer of mankind*, for having delivered it out of that real and miſerable bondage it had ſo long lived under, and having ſet it in perfect liberty. This is one of the greateſt favours our Saviour has beſtowed on us, one of the moſt remarkable advantages of the goſpel, and one of the chief effects of the Holy Ghoſt. *For*, as the Apoſtle ſays, *wherſoever the ſpirit of the Lord reſides, there liberty is to be found*, 2 Cor. iii. 17. It is, in fine, one of the nobleſt rewards God promiſes thoſe that ſerve him in this life. And it was this our Saviour himſelf promiſed to ſome perſons that had a mind to begin to enter into his ſervice, when he ſaid to them, *If you will obſerve my words, you ſhall be my true diſciples, and you ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall free you:* that is to ſay, ſhall give you a true liberty. To which they anſwered: *We are of the ſeed of Abraham, and never ſerved any body yet; how is it that you ſay, you ſhall be free? Jeſus anſwered them again,*

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I tell you ſincerely that every man that is guilty of ſin is a ſlave to ſin. A ſervant does not continue always in the family, but the ſon remains there always. If therefore the ſon ſhall ſet you at liberty, you will be truly free, John viii. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36.

2. Our Saviour by theſe words gives us plainly to underſtand that there are two ſorts of liberty; the one falſe, which, though it looks like liberty, is not ſo; the other true, which is what it appears to be. As for the falſe one, it belongs to thoſe perſons who, though their bodies are free, have put their ſouls under the arbitrary government of every paſſion; like Alexander the Great, who, after having made himſelf maſter of the whole world, was a ſlave to his own vices. But the true liberty is enjoyed by them alone whoſe ſouls are free from the yoke of ſuch tyrants, though their bodies may ſometimes perhaps be priſoners and ſometimes at large, as was St. Paul's; who, notwithſtanding his impriſonment, ſoared up to Heaven in ſpirit, and by his preaching and doctrine ſet the whole world free.

The reaſon why we with ſo much freedom call this *liberty*, and not the other, is, becauſe, ſince of thoſe two principal parts which compoſe man, to wit, the body and ſoul, the ſoul is beyond all compariſon the moſt noble, and, as it were, man's all; whereas the body is nothing but the matter and ſubject, or the caſe the ſoul is ſhut up in; it neceſſarily follows that he who has the beſt part of him at liberty, may be ſaid to be truly free, whilſt he, whoſe better part is under confinement, enjoys but a falſe liberty, though he has the free diſpoſal of his body, and may carry it where he pleaſes.

SECTION I.

Of the Slavery of the Wicked.

3. Should you aſk me, whoſe ſlave is he that is under ſuch a confinement? I anſwer, he is a ſlave to the moſt hideous tyrant we can poſſibly repreſent to ourſelves; I mean to ſin. For hell-torments being the moſt abominable thing in the world, ſin muſt of neceſſity be yet more abominable, in as much as theſe torments are but the effects of it. It is to this the wicked pay their ſlaviſh homage, as appears plainly from the words of our Saviour ſo lately cited: *Whoſoever is guilty of ſin is a ſlave to ſin.* John viii. 34. And can a man poſſibly be oppreſſed with a more deplorable ſlavery than this is?

Nor is he a ſlave to ſin only, but what is ſtill worſe, to thoſe that incite him to it, that is, to the world, the devil, and his own fleſh, depraved by ſin, and to every diſorderly appetite

appetite the flesh is the occasion of; for he who is a slave to the son must be a slave to his parents. Now there is none of us but knows that these three are the parents of sin, and upon this account they are stiled *the enemies of the soul*, because they are so prejudicial to it as to take it prisoner, and to put it under the power of such a cruel tyrant as sin is.

4. But though these three agree in this point, yet there is some kind of difference in their manner of proceeding; for the two first make use of the third, which is the flesh, like another Eve, for the deceiving of Adam, or like a spur to drive him on to all manner of mischief. For this reason the Apostle calls it *sin*, as it were, by excellence, giving the name of the effect to the cause, because there is no manner of sin whatever which it does not tempt us to. The divines, upon the same account, term it *fomes peccati*, that is, *the bait and nourishment of sin*, because it serves instead of wood and oil to keep in and encrease the fire of sin. But the name we generally call it by, is *sensuality*, *flesh*, or *concupiscence*, which, to speak more plainly, is nothing else but our sensual appetite, the cause of all our passions, as it is spoiled and corrupted by sin, it being the incentive and provocative, nay, and the very source of all manner of vices. This it is particularly that makes our other two enemies employ our sensual appetite as their instrument for the carrying on of the war against us. It was this that gave St. Basil occasion to say, "That our own desires are the chief arms with which the devil fights against us; because the immoderate affection we have for whatever we desire makes us endeavour to possess it right or wrong, and break through all that lies in our way, though forbid by the law of God; and from hence all sins take their rise and origin." St. Bas. Hom. 23. de non adher. reb. sæcularibus.

5. This appetite is one of the greatest tyrants the wicked are subject to, and by which the Apostle says they are made slaves; and though he calls them slaves, he does not mean that they have lost that freewill with which they were created, because this never was, nor ever will be lost, as to its essence, though man commit ever so many sins; but that sin, on the one side, has so weakened this freewill, and on the other, lent such forces to the appetite, that the stronger, generally speaking, prevails over the weaker.

Besides, what greater subject of grief can we have than to see man, whose soul is created according to God's own image, who is enlightened from Heaven, and has an understanding so subtile as to fly above all created beings, and to contemplate God

God himſelf; it is, I ſay, a deplorable thing to conſider that this ſoul ſhould take no notice of all theſe noble qualities, but let herſelf be governed by the blind impulſe of her beaſtly appetite, which has been corrupted by ſin and hurried on by the devil? What muſt a man expect from ſuch a government, and from ſuch directions, but dangers, calamities, and all kinds of unparalleled misfortunes?

6. I will give you a clearer proſpect of the deformity of this ſlavery, by an example which comes home to our preſent buſineſs. Repreſent to yourſelf a man married to a woman that is as noble, as beautiful, and as prudent as poſſibly woman can be, and that this fortunate man ſhould at the ſame time have a ſervant a moſt deformed creature and a meer ſorcereſs, who, envying her maſter's happineſs, ſhould give him a potion, ſo to pervert all his ſenſes, that, deſpiſing his wife and ſhutting her up in ſome corner of the houſe, he ſhould give himſelf over to this lewd ſervant of his, make her the companion of his bed and of all his pleaſures, ſhould conſult her upon the management of his affairs and family, and follow her advice in all things; nay, to pleaſe her, ſhould, at her command, ſquander away his whole eſtate in entertainments, feaſting, revelling, and ſuch kinds of delights, and ſhould, beſides all this, come to ſuch a pitch of madneſs as to oblige his wife to wait upon this wicked woman, and to obey all her commands. Can any one perſuade himſelf a man ſhould ever be guilty of ſuch folly? Who would not be aſtoniſhed at ſo great a madneſs? What indignation would he be in againſt this wicked woman, what pity would he take upon this poor injured lady, and how would he cry out againſt this blind and ſenſeleſs huſband? We ſhould look upon this action as baſe and infamous, and yet it is nothing in compariſon of what we are now treating of; for you are to underſtand that we ourſelves have theſe two different women, to wit, the ſpirit and the fleſh, within our own ſouls, which the divines, in other terms, call the *ſuperior* and the *inferior* part; the ſuperior part of our ſoul is that in which reſide the will and reaſon, which is that natural light God beſtowed on us at our creation. This reaſon is ſo beautiful and noble that it makes man like God, capable of enjoying him, and unites him by a brotherly love to the very angels. It is the noble woman to whom God has married man, that they may live together, and that he may follow its counſel and dictates in all things; that is to ſay, that he may let himſelf be guided by that celeſtial light, which is reaſon. But as for the inferior part of the ſoul, it is taken up by the ſenſual appetite,

appetite, which we have already ſpoken of, and which has been given us for no other end but the deſiring of things neceſſary for the ſupport of our lives, and for the conſervation of mankind. But this is to be done according to the rules which reaſon preſcribes, as a good ſteward would do, who makes no proviſion at all but what his maſter bids him. This appetite therefore is the ſlave we have all this while been talking of; nor is it fit to be a guide, becauſe it wants the light of reaſon, and upon that account muſt itſelf be directed by another. But man, on the contrary, has been ſo unhappy as to place ſuch an immoderate affection upon, and to give himſelf over entirely to, the ſatisfying of this wicked woman's luſts, that he has taken no notice of the ſuggeſtions of reaſon, which he ſhould have guided himſelf by, but has in all things followed the directions of his appetite, and made it his whole buſineſs to ſatisfy every irregular deſire. For we ſee there are ſome men ſo ſenſual, ſo unruly, and ſo abandoned to the deſires of their own hearts, that there is ſcarce any thing they propoſe, but immediately they, like beaſts, purſue it, without any reſpect either to the laws of juſtice or of reaſon. And what is this but giving themſelves up to the fleſh, which is the deformed loathſome ſlave, and following all thoſe delights and paſtimes ſhe has any inclination to, and deſpiſing the advice of that noble and lawful wife, which is our reaſon.

7. But what is ſtill more intolerable, they are not ſatisfied with uſing this lady ſo baſely, but will force her to ſerve this wretched ſlave, and to make it her whole buſineſs day and night to think of and to procure whatever may ſerve for the ſatisfying of her baſe deſires. For when a man employs all his wit and ſenſes about nothing in the world but inventing new faſhions in his dreſs, in his buildings, in his table and diet, for the pleaſing of his palate with new ſauces and pickles, in the furniture of his houſe, and in continually thinking of new means and devices for raking up of money to compaſs all theſe things, what does he elſe but take the ſoul off from thoſe ſpiritual exerciſes which are more ſuitable to the excellency of her nature, and make her a mere drudge to that creature who ought to have done the ſame offices for her? When a man that is paſſionately in love with a woman uſes all the wit he has in writing love-letters, and in compoſing ſongs and poems, and ſuch other practices as are uſual in thoſe caſes; what does he in all this, but make the miſtreſs wait upon the maid, by employing this divine light in contriving of means to ſatisfy the impure deſires of the fleſh? When

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king David uſed ſo many ſlights to cover the ſin he had committed in ſecret with Bathſheba, ſending for her huſband out of the camp, inviting him to ſupper, making him drunk, and afterwards giving him letters to the camp, with private orders to Joab to put him in the very heat of the engagement, that ſo the innocent man might be taken out of the way: 2 Reg. xi. who was contriver of this chain of wickedneſs but reaſon and the underſtanding? And who was it that tempted them to it but the wicked fleſh, to cloak her fault and to enjoy her delights with the more ſecurity? Seneca, though a Heathen and a philoſopher too, bluſhed at theſe things, and therefore uſed to ſay, "It is beneath me, who have been born to ſomething that is great, to be a ſlave to my own fleſh." Sen. Epiſt. 65. If we ſhould be aſtoniſhed at the ſtupidity of that man ſo bewitched, how much more reaſon have we to be concerned at this diſorder, which is the occaſion of our being deprived of much greater benefits, and of our falling into more deplorable misfortunes?

8. Now though this be ſo frequent and ſo monſtrous a diſorder, we take little notice of it, and no body is ſurprized at it, becauſe the world is ſo diſorderly. "For (as St. Bernard ſays) we are not ſenſible of the ſtench of our crimes, becauſe the number of them is too great." Bern. Ep. ad Fratres de Monte Dei. For as no body is affronted to be called a black-amoor in thoſe countries where every body is as black as himſelf, and as no one thinks it a diſgrace to be drunk, notwithſtanding the filthineſs of the ſin, where drunkenneſs is in faſhion, ſo this diſorder being general there is ſcarce any one that looks upon it as he ought to do. From what has been ſaid we may ſee how unhappy a ſlavery this is, and not only that, but what dreadful torments man muſt expect in puniſhment of his ſins, which have delivered up ſo noble a creature into the hands of ſo cruel a tyrant. The author of Eccleſiaſticus looked upon it as ſuch, when he prayed to God, *that he would deliver him from the inordinate deſires of ſenſuality, and from the concupiſcence of the fleſh; and that he would not give him over to a ſhameleſs and unbridled ſoul*, Eccl. xxiii. 6. As if he had begged not to be delivered up into the hands of ſome cruel tyrant or executioner, looking upon his irregular appetite as ſuch.

SECTION II.

9. If you would now be acquainted with the power of this tyrant, you may eaſily gather it, by obſerving what effects he has

has wrought in the world in all ages. I will not to this purpoſe repreſent to you the fictions of the poets, or ſet before you the example of their famous Hercules, who, after having killed or tamed all the monſters in the world, was himſelf at laſt ſo ſubdued by the unchaſte love of a woman as to lay down his club for a diſtaff, and to leave his adventures to ſit and ſpin amongſt a company of maids, in compliance to his haughty miſtreſs's commands. It is a pretty invention of the poets to ſhow what arbitrary power this paſſion exerciſes over us. Nor will I allege the authority of the holy ſcripture, in proof of this truth; nor bring the example of Solomon, a man of ſuch extraordinary wiſdom and ſanctity on one ſide, whilſt, on the other, he was proſtrating himſelf before his idols, and building temples to them, in complaiſance to his concubines. 3 Reg. xi. It is an example indeed that comes very home to our preſent purpoſe, but we will only take notice of thoſe inſtances that occur to us daily. Conſider therefore, what dangers an adultereſs expoſes herſelf to, for the ſatisfying of an inordinate appetite. I chuſe this paſſion before any of the reſt, that by this you may diſcover the force of the others. She knows, that ſhould her huſband ſurprize her in the crime ſhe is a dead woman, and that ſhe ſhall in one moment loſe her life, her honour, her riches and her ſoul, nay, and whatever elſe ſhe is capable of loſing either in this world or in the next, which is the greateſt loſs can be ſuſtained. She knows that, beſides all this, ſhe ſhall diſgrace her children and her whole family, and that ſhe ſhall herſelf find ſubject of eternal ſorrow; and yet ſuch is the force of this paſſion, or rather ſuch is the tyrant, that it makes her break through all theſe difficulties, and ſwallow down ſo many bitter draughts ſo eaſily, for the executing of all it commands her. Was there ever any maſter ſo cruel as to expoſe even his ſlave to ſo much danger, for the performance of his orders? Can you think of any ſlavery more hard and miſerable than this?

10. This is the ſtate the wicked generally live in, according to the royal Prophet's remark, when he ſays, *They are ſeated in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death; they ſuffer hunger and are bound down with chains of iron.* Pſ. cvi. 10. What can the Prophet mean by this darkneſs but the dark blindneſs the wicked live in, who neither know themſelves nor God as they ought to do, nor underſtand what it is they live for, or what is the end of their creation. They are unacquainted with the vanity of what they have a love for, and are not ſenſible of the ſlavery they are oppreſſed with. And what are the

chains that bind them down but the force of thoſe irregular affections, by which their hearts are ſo cloſe linked to all things they have ſo unlawful a love for? And what can this hunger ſignify but the inſatiable deſire they have of a great many things, which there is no poſſibility of obtaining? Is there any ſlavery ſo troubleſome as this?

11. Let us take another example yet of this ſame paſſion. Caſt your eyes on David's eldeſt ſon Ammon, who, as ſoon as ever he beheld his ſiſter Thamar with a wanton eye, was ſo blinded, ſo fettered, and ſo tormented with this hunger, that he could neither eat, drink, nor take any reſt; and this paſſion caſt him into ſuch a dangerous ſickneſs, that he had like to have loſt his life. Judge now how ſtrong thoſe chains of love and fear with which his heart was tied down muſt needs have been, ſince they made ſo great an impreſſion upon all the parts of his body as to throw him into ſo violent a diſtemper; and that you may not imagine him to be cured by the enjoyment of his deſire, conſider that he had no ſooner ſatisfied his wiſh but his diſtemper grew more violent, *ſo that*, as the ſcripture ſays, *he hated his ſiſter much worſe than he had ever loved her before.* 2 Reg. xiii. 15. Thus the accompliſhing of his wicked deſire could not free him from paſſion, but only turned one into another much worſe. Now what tyrant in the world has ſo many ways of handling his ſlaves, as ſin has?

12. Such is the condition of all thoſe who are under the tyrannical government of this vice; for we can ſcarce ſay they are their own maſters, ſince they neither eat nor drink but when it pleaſes; they diſcourſe and think of nothing elſe, it is the ſubject of their dreams, whilſt, at the ſame time, neither the fear of God nor the intereſt of their own ſouls, nor heaven, hell, death, nor judgment, nay, very often neither life itſelf nor their honour, which they have ſuch a tender concern for, are able to turn them out of the road, or to break the chain. What ſhall I ſay of the jealouſies, ſuſpicions, fears, and ſudden paſſions theſe unhappy wretches are perpetually racked with? What dangers do they expoſe themſelves to? And what continual hazards do they run of loſing both their lives and ſouls, for the enjoying of their filthy pleaſures: can any tyrant exerciſe ſo much cruelty upon the bodies of his ſlaves as this vice does upon the very hearts of thoſe that give themſelves over to it? For no ſlave is ſo much taken up with his maſter's buſineſs, but he has ſome time either in the day or night to take a little eaſe or reſt. But

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ſuch is the nature of this vice, and others like it, that as ſoon as ever they take poſſeſſion of a heart, they grow ſo ſovereign and arbitrary that man has ſcarce either power, means, time or wit to do any thing elſe. So that Eccleſiaſticus had a great deal of reaſon to ſay, *That wine and women make even wiſe men fools.* Eccl. xix. 2. Becauſe, let a man be ever ſo wiſe, he is as much beſotted with this vice as he is with wine, and is as little his own maſter, ſo that he can do nothing that becomes a rational creature. The prince of poets, to convince us of this truth, gives us a character of the famous queen Dido, who, at the very moment that ſhe fell in love with Æneas, laid aſide all her public employs, and went no farther in the building of her city; the walls and fortifications were carried up no higher; there was no training up of the youth in military diſcipline, no care about ſecuring the haven, or furniſhing the arſenal for the defence of their country. Virg. Æn. Lib. 4. And the reaſon the poet gives for it is, becauſe this tyrant had ſeized upon all the thoughts of this woman, ſo as to leave her unfit for any thing elſe but the entertaining and careſſing of this paſſion; a paſſion ſo uncontroulable and ſo arbitrary, that when it has once poſſeſſion of a heart it takes the power of doing any thing elſe away from it. O cruel and barbarous vice! the very diſturber and deſtroyer of whole ſtates and kingdoms, the ruin of all that is good and honourable, the plague of virtue, the cloud that hangs over and darkens the wits of ingenious men; the enchantreſs of the ſoul, that makes fools of wiſe men, that makes ſots and dotards of old men, that inflames and excites the boiling paſſions of young men, and that, in fine, is the common bane and deſtruction of mankind!

13. Nor is it this vice alone that is ſo tyrannical; all the reſt are, in their different ways, as cruel and as arbitrary. Conſider but the proud and ambitious man, who aims at nothing but reſpect, and walks blindly and darkly in the ſmoak of honours. See how this paſſion tyrannizes over him; with what greedineſs he catches at glory, what pains he takes to acquire it, directing every action of his life to this end; his ſervants, his retinue, his dreſs, his table, his chamber, his furniture, his attendants, his poſture, his gate, his mien, his diſcourſe, his looks, in fine, all he does tends this way, becauſe it is done ſo as it may gain him moſt eſteem, and procure him the empty puff and blaſt of honour; ſo that if you look narrowly into him you will find that what he does or ſays is a bait for popular applauſe and commendation. If we wonder at the folly of Do-

mitian the emperor for hunting after flies with a bodkin in his hand, when he had nothing elſe to do, how much more ſhould we admire the folly of the wretched ambitious man, who not only ſpends ſome ſpare time, but runs out his whole life in hunting after the ſmoak of worldly vanity? It is this makes the unhappy man do nothing he has a mind to do; he neither dreſſes himſelf according to his own fancy, nor goes where he himſelf would go; ſince he very often neglects even going to church, and does not care to converſe with virtuous perſons, for fear the world, whoſe ſlave he is, ſhould reflect upon him. And what is yet worſe, this vice makes him live above what he has, and by that means reduce himſelf to a thouſand neceſſities which ruin his ſoul, and are very often the eternal deſtruction of his poſterity, who have no other inheritance left them by him but his debts to diſcharge and his follies to imitate. Can ſuch perſons as theſe deſerve any eaſier puniſhment than that, they ſay, a certain king uſed to inflict on an ambitious man, which was, to ſtifle him with ſmoak, ſaying, it was no more than juſtice that he ſhould be condemned to die by ſmoak, for having ſpent all his life in ſeeking after ſmoak and wind. What miſery can be greater than this?

14. What ſhall I ſay of the greedy covetous man, who is not only a ſlave to but even an idolater of his money? While he ſerves, adores, and obeys in every thing it commands him; for this he faſts ſo rigorouſly as ſcarce to allow himſelf a morſel of bread; this treaſure, in fine, he loves more than he does God, whom he makes no ſcruple to offend for the leaſt profit. This is his comfort, his glory, his hope, the continual ſubject of all his thoughts, and the object of his love; with it he goes to ſleep, with it he riſes, employs his whole life about it, and is continually finding out new ways to improve it, neglecting at the ſame time and forgetting himſelf and every thing elſe. Can we call ſuch a man the maſter of his money, to diſpoſe of it as he has a mind, or ought we not rather to ſay, that inſtead of his money being a ſlave to him he becomes a ſlave to his money, conſidering himſelf, as it were, made for his money, and not his money for him? Neglecting his belly and his very ſoul, to give himſelf entirely to it?

15. Can there be a harder ſlavery than this? For if we call that man a priſoner who is clapt up into a dungeon, or loaded with chains and irons, what better name can we give him who has his ſoul oppreſſed and charged with the diſorderly affection of what he loves? For when a man is once come to this degree, he

he has not any one power of his ſoul that enjoys a perfect liberty, he is not his own maſter, but his ſlave, whom he has ſo paſſionate a love for. For whereſoever his love is there his heart will be, though ſtill he does not loſe his free-will. Nor does it ſignify any thing what chains you are tied down with, if the nobler part of you is made a priſoner; nor does your conſenting to your impriſonment make your confinement leſs, nay, on the contrary, if it be a true priſon, the more voluntary it is the more dangerous it will be, as we ſee in poiſon, which, if pure, is no leſs hurtful, becauſe it is ſweet: certainly there can be no ſtraiter priſon than that you are thus confined to, which makes you turn your eyes away from God, truth, honeſty and the laws of juſtice, and lords it over you at ſuch a rate, that, as a drunken man is not his own maſter, but a ſlave to his liquor, ſo he that is oppreſſed with this ſlavery is no longer in his own power, but at the command of his paſſion, though his free-will is yet remaining. Now if impriſonment be a torment, what greater torment can there be than that which one of theſe miſerable men endures, by continually deſiring what he knows he can never obtain, and yet he cannot forbear or curb his deſires, ſo that he is reduced to ſuch circumſtances that he knows not which way to turn himſelf. And being in this perplexity and trouble, he is forced to make uſe of the words of a certain poet to an ill-natured lewd woman: "I love you, and I hate you at the ſame time; and if you aſk me the reaſon of it, it is becauſe I can neither live with you nor without you." But if at any time he endeavours to break theſe chains, and to overcome his paſſions, he immediately finds ſuch reſiſtance that he very often deſpairs of obtaining the victory, and returns to his chains and ſlavery again. Do not you think, after all this, that we may very well be allowed to call this ſtate, *a torment and captivity?*

16. If theſe priſoners had but one chain to hold them, their miſery would be much leſs, for there were ſome hope of breaking a ſingle bond, or overcoming one enemy alone. But how miſerable muſt we imagine their condition to be, when we conſider what a great number of other paſſions, like ſo many fetters, keep down theſe unhappy creatures? For man's life lying open to ſo many neceſſities, and every neceſſity exciting ſome new deſire, and adding, as it were, another link to the chain, it follows that he who has a great many paſſions muſt have but very little command of his own heart; but ſtill this is more in ſome perſons than in others; for ſome mens apprehenſion is naturally ſo tenacious that they

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can ſcarce ever put from them any thing that has once taken poſſeſſion of their imagination; others are of a melancholy temper, which makes them conceited and violent in their deſires; others are mean-ſpirited, who look upon all things, though ever ſo inconſiderable, as great and worthy to be coveted, for every little thing ſeems great to a poor ſoul; others are naturally violent in whatever they deſire, as generally women are; "who," as a philoſopher obſerves, "paſſionately love or hate, becauſe there is no medium in their affections." All theſe paſſions exerciſe continual cruelties upon thoſe that are ſubject to them: and now if the miſery of being bound with but one chain and of ſerving only one maſter be ſo great, how miſerable muſt that man's condition be who is held by ſo many chains, and has ſuch a great number of maſters to command him as the wicked man has, for every paſſion and vice he is ſubject to is a ſeveral maſter, and requires his obedience and ſubmiſſion.

Can there be any greater miſery than this? For if the dignity of man, as man, depends on two things, viz. reaſon and free-will, what can be more oppoſite, either to the one or the other, than paſſion is, which at the ſame time blinds the reaſon and drags away the free-will along with it? By which you may perceive what prejudice we are apt to receive from the leaſt irregular affection, ſince it turns a man out of the throne of his majeſty, obſcures his reaſon, and perverts his free-will, without which two, man is no longer a reaſonable creature, but a mere brute. See here the unhappy ſlavery the wicked are reduced to, as men that will neither take notice of the laws or inſpirations of God, nor the dictates of their own reaſon, but are hurried away by the impulſe of their own paſſions and appetites.

SECTION III.

Of the Liberty virtuous Men here enjoy.

17. This is the cruel ſlavery the Son of God came down from heaven to deliver us from; and it is this liberty and victory Iſaiah ſo highly commends, when he ſays, *Thoſe whom thou haſt redeemed ſhall rejoice in thee, O Lord, as the huſbandmen do in the time of harveſt, and as conquerors do after they have taken a prey, and are dividing the ſpoils. For thou haſt taken away the yoke which oppreſſed them, and the rod which ſtruck them, and delivered them from the ſcepter of this tyrant, who has laid very heavy taxes upon them.* Iſ. ix. 3, 4. All theſe names, of

of *yoke*, of *rod*, and *ſceptre*, agree very well with the tyrannical power of our paſſions and appetites, becauſe the devil, who is the prince of this world, makes uſe of them as very proper inſtruments to work us into an allegiance to his tyranny, and into a ſubjection to ſin. From this tyranny and ſubjection the Son of God has delivered us by the ſuperabundance of his grace, which the ſacrifice he made of himſelf on the croſs has purchaſed for us. For which reaſon the Apoſtle ſays, *That our old man has been crucified with him*, Rom. vi. 6. meaning here by *the old man*, our ſenſitive appetite, which became diſorderly by the ſin of our firſt parents. And the reaſon why our old man has been crucified with him is, becauſe he, by the merit of his paſſion, has obtained grace for us, whereby we may ſubdue this tyrant, and make him ſuffer the ſame puniſhment he has cauſed us to ſuffer, thus crucifying him who before crucified us, and bringing him into ſlavery, under whoſe ſlavery we have been ſo long groaning. Thus, what the prophet Iſaiah foretold in another place, has come to paſs: *They ſhall take thoſe who took them before, and ſhall bring thoſe that have oppreſſed them under their ſubjection.* Iſa. xiv. 2. For our ſenſual appetite, before the reign of grace, tyrannized over our underſtanding, and made it a ſlave to all its unlawful deſires; but as ſoon as ever grace came in to its ſuccour, it grew ſo ſtrong as to prevail againſt this tyrant, and make it ſubmit to what reaſon preſcribed.

18. This ſubduing of the appetite to reaſon has been, in a particular manner, repreſented to us by the death of Adonibezech, king of Jeruſalem, who was put to death by the children of Iſrael, after they had firſt cut off his fingers and toes. This unhappy prince ſeeing himſelf in this condition, and calling to mind the cruelties he had before exerciſed upon others, was heard to ſay, *Threeſcore and ten kings, whoſe fingers and toes I have cut off, have picked up the ſcraps that have fallen under my table, and now I ſee that God deals with me juſt as I dealt with them.* Jud. i. 7. After which the ſcripture adds, that he was carried in this condition to Jeruſalem, and died there. This cruel tyrant is the figure of this world, which, before the Son of God came down from Heaven, cut off the hands and feet of almoſt all men in general, by this means maiming and putting them out of the capacity of ſerving God, cutting off their hands to hinder them from doing any good, and their feet to prevent them from ſo much as deſiring it; and, beſides all this, reducing them to the neceſſity of living upon the poor ſcraps that fell under his table, that is, the ſenſual

ſual pleaſures of the world, wherewith this wicked prince maintains his ſervants. There is much reaſon for calling them ſcraps, and not pieces of bread, becauſe this tyrant is ſo nigardly in diſtributing of theſe crumbs and fragments, that he never gives enough to ſatisfy their appetite. But after our Saviour came into the world, he made this tyrant undergo the ſame torments he had put others to before, cutting off his hands and feet, that is, defeating all his forces. The ſcripture expreſly declares, that Adonibezech died in Jeruſalem, becauſe this was the place where our Saviour by his death deſtroyed the prince of this world, and where dying upon the croſs he crucified this tyrant, binding him hand and foot and taking all his power from him. And therefore immediately after his moſt ſacred paſſion men began to triumph and inſult over this tyrant, and ſo to lord it over the world, the devil, and the fleſh, with all its concupiſcences, that neither all the tortures they could be threatened with on one ſide, nor all the pleaſures that could be propoſed to them on the other, were able to make them commit any mortal ſin.

SECTION IV.

Of the Cauſes whence this Liberty proceeds.

19. You will aſk perhaps whence this great victory and liberty proceeds? To which I anſwer, that next to God it proceeds immediately, as I have ſaid already from his grace, which by the means of thoſe virtues it inſpires, ſo moderates the heat of our paſſions, as not to let them get the better of reaſon. So that as ſorcerers can by certain ſpells enchant ſnakes, that they ſhall do no hurt, without killing them or taking away their venom, ſo the grace of God charms all the venomous ſerpents of our paſſions; and though it ſtill leaves them their natural being in perfect vigour, yet they can do us no hurt with their poiſon, becauſe they are not capable as they were before to infect our lives. This was meant by the prophet Iſaiah, when he ſaid, *The ſucking child ſhall ſport himſelf over the hole of an aſp, and he that is weaned ſhall put his hand into the baſiliſk's den. They ſhall not hurt or kill any body in all my holy mountain, becauſe the earth ſhall be as full of knowledge of the Lord as the ſea is of the waters that cover it.* Iſa. xi. 8, 9. It is plain the Prophet does not ſpeak here of viſible but of inviſible ſerpents, which are nothing but our own paſſions and bad inclinations, which when once they break out are enough to corrupt the whole world: nor does he ſpeak of corporal children

children but of the ſpiritual; and thoſe he calls *ſucking children*, are ſuch as are but juſt beginning to ſerve God, and therefore muſt be fed with milk; but thoſe that are weaned are ſuch as have made a greater progreſs, and can go alone, and eat bread and ſtronger meats. The Prophet therefore, ſpeaking of both of them, ſays of the former, that they ſhall be glad to ſee, notwithſtanding they are perpetually in the very midſt of theſe inviſible ſerpents, that the grace of God will ſecure them from receiving any conſiderable hurt, by not permitting them to conſent in any manner to ſin. As for the latter, thoſe I mean that are already weaned, and have advanced farther in the way of God, he ſays they ſhall put their hands into the very dens of baſiliſks, which is as much as to ſay, that God will preſerve them even in their greateſt dangers; ſo that we ſee theſe words of the Pſalmiſt verified in them. *You ſhall walk over the aſp and the baſiliſk, and you ſhall tread upon the lion and the dragon.* Pſ. xc. 13. Theſe are they that ſhall receive no harm at all, though they put their hands into a baſiliſk's den, becauſe theſe ſerpents ſhall be ſo charmed by the abundance of God's grace, ſpreading itſelf over the whole face of the earth, that they ſhall not do any hurt to the children of God.

20. St. Paul explains this much more clearly and without any kind of metaphor; for after having diſcourſed very fully of the tyranny our irregular affections and our fleſh exerciſe over us, he cries out at laſt, *Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24. But he himſelf immediately anſwers his own queſtion in ſhort, and ſays, *The grace of God which is given us by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* ver. 25. What he means here, by *the body of death*, is not this body of ours that is ſubject to a natural death, which we all of us look for, but what he himſelf, in another place, calls *the body of ſin*, Rom. vi. 6. that is, our depraved appetite, from which proceed all inordinate affections which are continually enticing us to ſin, juſt as the members do from the body; and this is the body the Apoſtle ſays, the grace that is given us through Jeſus Chriſt delivers us from, as from a cruel tyrant.

21. The ſecond, and that a main cauſe of this liberty, is the greatneſs of that joy and of thoſe ſpiritual conſolations which the virtuous enjoy, as we have proved already. By theſe all their deſires are ſo fully ſatisfied that they eaſily overcome and diſmiſs all their irregular appetites; and having found out this ſource of all that is good and pleaſant, they co-

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yet no other happineſs, as our Saviour himſelf declared to the Samaritan woman, when he told her, *Whoſoever ſhall drink of the water which I ſhall give him,* (which is the grace of God) *ſhall never thirſt again.* John iv. 13. St. Gregory aſſures us of the ſame thing, in one of his Homilies, in theſe words: "He who is once thoroughly acquainted with the ſweetneſs of a heavenly life, immediately bids adieu to all thoſe things he had a ſenſual love for before. He forſakes all he is in poſſeſſion of, he diſtributes liberally all his treaſures, his heart is enflamed with the deſire of Heaven, there is nothing upon earth can pleaſe him, and whatever he before thought beautiful and lovely, he now accounts deformed and hideous, becauſe this precious jewel is the only thing that ſhines and glitters to the eyes of his ſoul." For when the veſſel of our heart is full of this liquor, and the thirſt of our ſoul is quenched with the ſame, it has no occaſion to run after the fleeting and vain pleaſures of this life, but live free from the ſlavery of all thoſe affections which baſe earthly pleaſure excited in her; becauſe where there is no love there can can be no ſlavery: and thus the heart that has found him who is the Lord of all things, finds itſelf to be in ſome meaſure Lord of all things, there being no other ſolid good which it does not meet with in this one good.

22. Add to theſe two Divine favours which aſſiſt us ſo much in the regaining of our liberty, the pains virtuous men take to ſubdue the fleſh to the ſpirit, and to make the paſſions ſubmit to reaſon. By this means they gradually mortify their paſſions, obtain a habit of virtue, and lay aſide that hate and violence which uſed to diſturb them before. "For if (as St. Chryſoſtom ſays) the wildeſt beaſts that are, by living amongſt men, come in time to loſe their natural fierceneſs, and to grow tame and gentle, by obſerving the ſame qualities in men;" which gave a poet occaſion to ſay, that time and cuſtom bring lions under obedience; what wonder is it that our paſſions, if we but accuſtom them to ſubmit to reaſon, ſhould by degrees become tame and rational, that is, ſhould in ſome manner partake of the quality of the ſpirit and of reaſon, and love nothing more than to do as they do? Now if this may be done only by uſe and cuſtom, how much ſooner and more efficaciouſly muſt it of neceſſity be effected, when uſe and cuſtom are backed by grace?

23. Hence it is, that thoſe who ſerve God very often feel a more ſenſible pleaſure and ſatisfaction, if I may ſo term it, in their recollection, ſilence, reading, prayers, meditations, and

and in all their other exerciſes, than they could find in hunting, hawking, gaming, and converſation, or in any other worldly recreations and diverſions, which they look upon as mere torments, inſomuch that the fleſh itſelf begins now to hate what it loved before, and to be pleaſed with what it formerly loathed. All this is ſo true " that the inferior part of our ſouls (as St. Bonaventure obſerves, in the Preface of his Incentive to the Love of God) is very often ſo delighted in prayer and in converſing with God, that it is no ſmall torment to it, when there is any, though ever ſo juſt, cauſe that obliges it to break off theſe exerciſes " And this is what the royal Prophet meant, when he ſaid, *I will praiſe the Lord, becauſe he has given me underſtanding, and alſo becauſe my reins have reproved me*, Pſ. xv. 7. or, as another tranſlation has it, *have inſtructed me all the night long*. This is without doubt a particular favour of God Almighty's grace, becauſe the expoſitors of the holy ſcriptures underſtand in this place, by the *reins*, all the inward affections and motions of man; which, as we have ſaid already, are the general incentives to ſin.— But yet by virtue of this grace they are very often ſo far from ſtirring us up to ſin, as they uſed to do, or from fighting for the devil, whoſe ſervice they were engaged in before, that, on the contrary, they forward us in virtue and running over to Jeſus Chriſt, turn their arms againſt the common enemy: Though this may be ſeen in all the exerciſes of a ſpiritual life, it appears much more plainly in our ſorrow and contrition for our ſins, wherein the inferior part of our ſoul has its ſhare, afflicting itſelf and ſhedding tears for them. This is the reaſon of David's ſaying, *that his reins reproved him in the night-time;* becauſe then the day being ended, the juſt are uſed to examine their conſciences, and to bewail whatever they have offended in; and then it was, that he himſelf, as he ſays in another place, *ſwept his ſpirit* by this exerciſe, Pſ. lxxvi. 7. It was in the night, I ſay, that his reins reproved him, becauſe the ſorrow which he felt in this part of his ſoul, for having offended God, was a continual correction, to keep him from falling into thoſe ſins again which had troubled him ſo much. Upon which account he, with a great deal of juſtice, thanks God, becauſe not only the ſuperior part of his ſoul, which is the ſeat of reaſon, invited him to good, but even the inferior part too, which is uſed for the moſt part to encourage us to evil: though all this be really true, and one of the greateſt benefits we receive from Chriſt's redemption, who redeemed us moſt fully and gave us perfect liberty, yet we ought not to take

take occaſion from hence to be negligent, nor truſt too much to our fleſh, be it ever ſo mortified, during the courſe of this mortal life.

24. Theſe therefore are the chief cauſes of this extraordinary liberty. And amongſt ſeveral other effects it produces, one is the new knowledge we have of God, and the confirming of us in the faith and religion we profeſs, as God himſelf openly declares to us, by the Prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxxiv. 27. ſaying, *All men ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall break the chains of their yokes, and ſhall deliver them from the hands of thoſe that tyrannize over them.* We have ſaid already that this yoke was our ſenſuality, or our inordinate affection for ſin, which dwells within our fleſh and which oppreſſes us and makes us ſubject to ſin. The chains of this yoke are all thoſe bad inclinations by which the devil catches hold of us and draws us after him; now theſe bad inclinations are ſo much the more efficacious, as they have been fortified by a longer habit. St. Auguſtine, by his own confeſſions, had ſufficient experience of this; for he ſays, "I was bound not with another's fetters, but thoſe of my own hard and iron will, which the enemy had in his power, and of which he made a chain for me and tied me down with the ſame. For my perverſe will has been the cauſe of my vicious deſire, and whilſt I followed my vicious deſires I contracted a vicious habit, which for want of being reſiſted grew into a neceſſity; with all which, as with ſo many links that have gone towards the making up of the chain, I have been tied down and reduced to the utmoſt hardſhip." Conf. L. 8. c. 5. When a man finds himſelf, as this ſaint did, to have been groaning for ſome time under ſlavery, and after having made ſeveral attempts to get out of it, perceives his eſcape ſo difficult, yet when he addreſſes himſelf to God, ſees all his chains broken, his paſſions mortified, himſelf at liberty and maſter of his own appetites, with the yoke that had preſſed ſo heavily upon his ſhoulders lying now under his feet, who but God can he imagine has broken his fetters, and eaſed him of the weight that had ſo long galled his neck? What has he to do but to praiſe God with the royal Prophet, and to cry out with him, *O Lord, thou haſt broken my chains; I will offer up a ſacrifice of praiſe to thee, and will call upon thy holy name*, Pſ. cxv. 8.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the eighth Privilege of Virtue, viz. *the inward Peace and Calm the Virtuous enjoy, and of the miſerable Reſtleſneſs and Diſturbance the Wicked feel within themſelves.*

1. FROM this privilege above-mentioned, which is the liberty of the ſons of God, flows another nothing inferior to it, which is the inward peace and tranquillity they enjoy. For the better underſtanding whereof it is to be obſerved, there are three ſorts of peace, one with our neighbour, another with God, and the third with ourſelves. Peace with our neighbours conſiſts in ſuch a friendly and civil correſpondence with them as baniſhes all deſign or deſire of doing any man a prejudice. This peace David had, when he ſays, *I was peaceable with thoſe that hated peace, and when I ſpoke to them with meekneſs they without any reaſon roſe up againſt me,* Pſ. cxix. 7. St. Paul recommends this ſame peace to us, when he adviſes us, *to uſe our utmoſt endeavours as far as is poſſible to live in peace with all men,* Rom. xii. 18. The ſecond peace, which is that with God, conſiſts in the friendſhip and favour of God; it is to be obtained by the means of juſtification, which reconciles man to God, and makes them both love one another without any diſturbance or contradiction on either ſide. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of this peace, ſays, *Since we are already juſtified by faith through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who has procured us this grace, let us live in peace with God,* Rom. v. 1. The laſt peace is that which a man has with himſelf, nor ought any body to wonder at this kind of peace, ſince we know very well that there are in the very ſelf-ſame man two men ſo oppoſite to one another as are the outward and the inward man, the fleſh and the ſpirit, the paſſions and reaſon. For the fleſh and the paſſions are not only at a perpetual variance with the ſpirit, but beſides diſturb the whole man with their irregular appetites, and trouble his inward peace, which conſiſts in tranquillity of mind.

SECTION I.

Of the inward Reſtleſneſs and Diſquiet of the Wicked.

2. Wicked men and ſuch as hearken to the perſuaſions of the fleſh are never free from ſuch diſturbances as theſe. For being, on the one hand, deprived of God's grace, which is the

the curb to keep their paſſions in awe, and on the other, their deſires being ſo active and unruly that they are ſcarce able to reſiſt them in the leaſt thing imaginable, it neceſſarily follows that they muſt be carried away by an infinite number of oppoſite deſires, ſome by the deſire of honour, others of great employs, others of converſation and friendſhip, others of great and honourable titles, others of riches, others again of ſucceſs in marriage, and others of recreations and pleaſures. For this appetite is like a devouring fire that conſumes whatever it catches hold of, or like a ravenous beaſt that is never ſatisfied, or like the leech that is perpetually thirſting after blood; and which, as Solomon ſays, *has two daughters that are always crying out, More yet, more yet*, Prov. xxx. 15. This leech is nothing but the unſatiable deſire of our heart, and her two children are *neceſſity* and *concupiſcence*. The firſt of them ſeems to be a true thirſt, but the laſt is only a falſe one, though they are both of them equally troubleſome, notwithſtanding our ſuppoſing one to be a real, the other but a pretended neceſſity. This is the reaſon why no wicked man, whether he be rich or poor, can ever enjoy any content. For if he be poor, then want is continually diſturbing his heart, and crying out, *More yet, more yet;* whilſt concupiſcence never ceaſes to break the rich man's reſt with the ſame noiſe. How then can man enjoy any eaſe that has two ſuch importunate beggars always making a noiſe at his door, and craving many things he is not able to give them? What trouble muſt a poor mother be in that has ten or a dozen of children hanging about her, continually bawling for bread, if ſhe has not a morſel to give them? This is one of the greateſt miſeries the wicked endure: *They periſh*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *with hunger and thirſt, and their ſouls fail within them*, Pſ. cxxxvi. 5. For ſelf-love, the cauſe of all theſe deſires, having got ſo much power over them, and they placing all their happineſs in earthly riches and pleaſures, it is impoſſible they ſhould not, with greedineſs, hunger and thirſt after thoſe things upon which they imagine all their happineſs depends. And becauſe they cannot always obtain what they long for, being prevented by others more covetous and powerful than they, they diſturb themſelves like a froward child that longs for every thing it ſees, and grows ſullen if denied it. For as the obtaining of our wiſh is, according to the wiſe man, *the tree of life*, Pſ. xiii. 12. ſo there is nothing in the world torments us worſe than to be diſappointed of what we have a mind for. It is juſt like being ready to die for hunger, and having nothing to eat.

eat. But what is worſt of all, the more they are hindered from obtaining their deſires, the more their deſire encreaſes, and as they find they have leſs hopes left, they are more vexed and troubled; ſo that they are continually turned about like a wheel that is in perpetual motion.

3. This is the miſerable condition our Saviour expreſſed ſo much to the life, by the parable of the prodigal ſon, Luke xv. of whom he ſays, That leaving his father's houſe, he travelled into a far country, and there ſquandered away his eſtate in riot and debauchery: and when he had ſpent all, there happened to be a great famine in thoſe parts, during which he was reduced to that extremity as to be obliged to look after ſwine; and what is ſtill more, he was put to ſuch ſtreights as to deſire to fill his belly with what the hogs themſelves lived on, and yet no body would give him even that. Could any one lay out the whole courſe of a wicked man's life, with all the miſeries that attend it, in more lively colours than theſe? Who can this prodigal ſon be that leaves his father's houſe, but the unhappy ſinner who ſeparates himſelf from Almighty God, gives himſelf over to all ſorts of vices, and abuſes all God's favours and mercies? What is this country, where there is ſo great a famine, but this miſerable world, where worldly men are ſo inſatiable in their deſires as never to be ſatisfied with what they have, but are perpetually running up and down like ravenous wolves, ſtill ſeeking after more? And what can you imagine is the employ of their whole life, but feeding of hogs, that is, labouring how to content their own ſwiniſh appetites? If you are not convinced of this truth, obſerve a very young man who is wholly intent upon the world from morning till night, and you will ſee that all his buſineſs is, beaſt-like, to find out new ways to pleaſe and delight ſome one or more of his ſenſes, as the ſight, the taſte, the hearing, or the reſt, as if he were one of Epicurus's followers, and not a diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt, as if he had nothing elſe to look after but a body like a beaſt, as if he believed that ſenſual pleaſures were his only end. Thus his whole entertainment is to run from place to place, here to-day and there to-morrow, in purſuit of freſh delights for the feeding of his corporal ſenſes. What other end can he have in his gallantry, in his feaſting and banqueting, in his ſoft beds, in his muſic, in his converſations, in his viſits, in his walks, but to look after meat for this ſort of ſwine? You may give all this what name you pleaſe, call it gentility or grandeur, or good breeding, if you will, but know that, in the language of God and of the goſpel, it is nothing

but

but feeding of ſwine, becauſe as hogs love to be wallowing in the dirt and mire, ſo the hearts of ſuch men love nothing but the filth of carnal pleaſures.

4. But the greateſt miſery is, to ſee that the ſon of ſuch a noble father, born to be fed with the bread of angels at God's own table, cannot ſatisfy his hunger with ſuch vile food, ſo great is the ſcarcity of it. Becauſe there being ſo many buyers of this commodity they hinder one another, and ſo they all go away unſatisfied. My meaning is, that whilſt ſo many are catching at it, there muſt needs be much ſtrife, as it is impoſſible for ſwine to feed under an oak without grunting and biting one another to get the better ſhare of the acorns that fall.

This is the dreadful hunger holy David deſcribes, where he ſays, *They have wandered up and down in the wilderneſs in a dry place, hungering and thirſting, till they were juſt ready to drop down*, Pſ. cvi. 45. What can this extreme hunger and thirſt be but the inordinate deſire of the things of this world the wicked are inflamed with? This appetite of theirs is ſuch, that the more they give it the greedier it grows, the more it drinks the drier it is, and the more wood they lay on the more violently it burns. O unhappy creatures, what can be the cauſe of your being parched up with ſuch a burning thirſt as this, *but your having forſaken the fountain of living water, and running to drink out of broken ciſterns which can hold none?* Jer. ii. 13. You have miſtaken the ſtream of true happineſs, and for this reaſon you run up and down, till you loſe yourſelves, through wild and deſert places, in ſearch of the muddy-ponds and lakes of the periſhable goods of this world, in hopes they will quench your thirſt. This was cruel Holofernes's policy when he beſieged Bethulia; for as ſoon as ever he ſat down before the city, he commanded his men to cut off all the pipes and channels that conveyed water to the town, ſo that the poor beſieged had but a few little ſprings left, juſt by the walls where they uſed to drink now and then by ſtealth, rather wetting their lips than quenching their thirſt. Is not this your caſe you who are always ſeeking after pleaſures, you who are perpetually in purſuit of honour, and who are ſuch friends to every thing that pleaſes the appetite, for having miſſed of the fountain of living waters? what elſe do you do but run to the little ſprings of creatures that come in your way, and rather ſerve to wet your lips and increaſe your thirſt than to quench it? O unfortunate man! *Why will you go into Egypt to drink troubled water?* Jer. ii. 18. What water can be more troubled than ſenſual pleaſure, which is not to be drank without perceiving an ungrate-

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ful taſte and ſmell? For what worſe ſmell than the ſtench of ſin, and what more unpalatable than the remorſe of conſcience occaſioned by it? which, as we are told, even by a philoſopher, are both the inſeparable companions of carnal pleaſures.

5. Beſides this appetite being blind, and unable to diſtinguiſh between what it can obtain and what it cannot, and the eagerneſs of deſire making that appear very eaſy which is in itſelf moſt difficult, thoſe things are often coveted that cannot be obtained; for there is nothing worth coveting, but what is much ſought after and defended by many lovers. Now the appetite being deprived of what it longs for, being hungry and wanting whereon to feed, often ſtretching out its arms, and yet graſping nothing but the air, and uſing all endeavours without any ſucceſs, therefore it frets inwardly, waſtes and conſumes to ſee itſelf ſo far from what it deſires. For thoſe two chief faculties of our ſouls, the iraſcible and concupiſcible, being ſo cloſely united together as never to be wanting to one another, it is certain that whenever the concupiſcible is fruſtrated of its deſire, the iraſcible comes in immediately to relieve it, raging and expoſing itſelf to all accidents and dangers, that it may give the other ſatisfaction. From this confuſion of deſires proceeds the inward diſturbance we are now ſpeaking of, which St. James calls a *war*, when he ſays, *From whence come wars and differences among you? Come they not hence even of your luſts that war in your members? Ye luſt and have not*, &c. Jam. iv. 1, 2. The natural contradiction that is between the fleſh and the ſpirit, and between the deſires of each, has given the Apoſtle a great deal of reaſon to call it a war.

6. There is ſtill another thing of this nature much to be lamented, which is, that very often men obtain all that ſeemed to ſuffice to put them into the ſtate of ſatisfaction they aimed at, and when they are in ſuch a condition, that if they pleaſed they might live happy, they then conceit they ought to aſpire to ſome other honour, preferment, dignity, or the like, which if they fail of, they are more perplexed for the miſs of that nothing they want, than pleaſed with the enjoyment of all they poſſeſs. Thus they paſs their life with this thorn perpetually pricking, or rather with this ſcourge, continually chaſtiſing them, which palls all their happineſs and turns their pleaſure into ſmoke and vapour. This is what I call *railing up the cannon*, as enemies do in time of war; for a little nail driven into the biggeſt piece of artillery is enough to make it unfit for ſervice. The cannon is ſtill as big and as ſound as it was be-

fore, and yet ſuch a little thing makes it loſe all its force. God deals after the ſame manner with the wicked. They might ſee plainly, if they would but open their eyes, that joy of heart is a free gift of Almighty God, who beſtows it upon whom he pleaſes and when he pleaſes, without making any preparation beforehand as we do, and that he can take it away again whenever he thinks fit, only by nailing up the cannon, that is, by permitting ſome unhappy turn or change of their proſperity and fortune. And then this ſingle misfortune, though unknown to any body, is ſufficient to make them as uneaſy and melancholy as if they had nothing in the world to live on, though at the ſame time they may be very rich and happy in all appearance. God himſelf tells us as much, when ſpeaking by the Prophet Iſaiah, againſt the pride and power of the king of Aſſyria: he ſays, *That he will weaken his greateſt force, and put fire under his glory, for to burn it up*, Iſa. x. 6. to ſhew us that God can ſink a veſſel when it ſails with the faireſt wind, can weaken the greateſt ſtrength, and make a man miſerable in the midſt of his proſperity. The ſame is ſignified to us again, in the book of Job, xxvi. 5. where it is ſaid, *The giants groan under the waters*, to let us know that God has his deep places and his puniſhments for the great as well as for the little ones, though theſe ſeem to lie more open to the misfortunes and injuries of the world. But Solomon has expreſſed the ſame thing much plainer; when counting up all the notable miſeries in the world, he reckons this one of the greateſt of them. *There is another evil alſo*, ſays he, *which I have ſeen under the ſun, and which is common amongſt men. A man to whom God has given wealth, riches and honour, ſo that he wanteth nothing for his ſoul of all that he deſireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a ſtranger eateth it*, Eccl. vi. 1, 2. What does he mean by theſe words, *God giveth him not power to eat thereof*, but that he ſhall not enjoy even what is his own, nor take the ſatisfaction and pleaſure which his poſſeſſions might give him, becauſe God has ordained that his happineſs ſhall be diſturbed and ruined. And here we are given to underſtand, that as true wiſdom is not to be learned by dead letters, but that it is God who teaches it, ſo neither does true content depend upon the goods of this world, but upon God alone.

7. But to come home to our ſubject, how unhappy muſt thoſe poor creatures be, who have nothing, if even thoſe who enjoy all they can wiſh are ſo uneaſy, becauſe they do not enjoy God? For the want of every one of theſe things is a particular

ticular hunger and thirſt that torment them, and a thorn that is perpetually pricking their hearts: what peace, what quiet is it poſſible for a ſoul to have when all its thoughts and deſires are continually ſo importunate and rebellious? The Prophet ſays very well of ſuch ſort of people, *That the heart of the wicked is like a tempeſtuous ſea, which is not to be calmed*, Iſ. lvii. 20. And indeed what ſea, what waves, or what winds can be more boiſterous and ſtormy than the paſſions and deſires of the wicked, which very often diſturb not only the ſea but all the world. But there often ſtart up contrary winds in this ſea, which is another more violent ſort of ſtorm. For the ſame deſires, like oppoſite winds, frequently reſiſt one another, ſo that what pleaſes the fleſh does not pleaſe honour, what honour loves, riches do not care for; reputation does not covet that which is agreeable to wealth, nor does ſloth or luxury deſire what reputation does. So that by this means it often happens that the wicked, whilſt they deſire all things, do not know what they would have, and ſo are ignorant what to take and what to leave, becauſe their deſires contradict one another; juſt as bad humours do in diſtempers which proceed from different cauſes, where the phyſicians are puzzled what remedy to preſcribe, becauſe that which is good for the expelling of one humour, may be apt to nouriſh another. Such was the confuſion of languages at Babel, and ſuch was that, for the preventing of which the royal Prophet prayed to God, ſaying, *Deſtroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, becauſe I have beheld iniquity and contradiction in the city*, Pſ. liv. 10. What, therefore, can this *diviſion of tongues*, this *iniquity* and this *contradiction* be, but the diſturbance which different paſſions make in the hearts of worldly-minded men when they oppoſe one another, and one deſires that which is againſt the inclination and deſire of another.

SECTION II.

Of the inward Peace and Satisfaction good Men enjoy.

8. Thus you ſee what the condition of the wicked is, whilſt the juſt, on the contrary, becauſe they know how with prudence to moderate their deſires, how to mortify their paſſions, how to make God, and not the periſhable goods of this life, the only object of their happineſs, and the center of their repoſe, how to aim at nothing but the acquiring of thoſe eternal goods which no body can deprive them of, how to be in a perpetual war with ſelf-love, with their own fleſh, and with the whole

train of their irregular appetites; and becauſe, in fine, they know how to reſign their will to God's, to conform theirs to his, and throw themſelves entirely into his arms, are never moleſted by any ſuch cares, ſo as to have their inward peace loſt or ſo much as interrupted.

This, amongſt ſeveral others, is one of the chief rewards God Almighty promiſes to thoſe that love him, as we may ſee almoſt every where in the holy ſcriptures. Holy David ſays, *Thoſe that love thy law, O Lord, enjoy a perfect peace, and there is nothing that can make them fall*, Pſ. cxviii. 165. God himſelf ſays by the prophet Iſaiah, *I wiſh you had obſerved my commandments, your peace ſhould have been like a river, and your juſtice like the waters of the ſea*, Iſa. xlviii. 18. The reaſon of his calling this peace a *river* is, becauſe it is able to extinguiſh the flames of our deſires, to appeaſe the burning heat of our luſts, to water the dry and barren veins of our hearts, and to comfort and refreſh our ſouls. Solomon aſſures us of the ſame truth in a divine manner, though in a few words, ſaying, *When the ways of a man are acceptable to God he will force even his enemies to make peace with him*, Prov. xvi. 7. What enemies are theſe that are at war with man but his own paſſions and the evil inclinations of his fleſh, which are perpetually fighting with the ſpirit? God Almighty therefore ſays, that he will make the fleſh and the ſpirit live peaceably together, when, by the virtue of this grace and of good habits, the fleſh, with all its deſires, ſhall accuſtom itſelf to the works of the ſpirit, and by that means live quietly with it, whereas before it was in continual oppoſition. For though virtue at the beginning meets with a great deal of oppoſition from the paſſions, yet when it comes to its perfection it acts with a great deal of ſweetneſs and eaſe, and with much leſs contradiction. It is this peace, in fine, which holy David, by another name, calls *the enlarging of the heart*, when he ſays, *Thou haſt enlarged my ſteps under me, O Lord, and my feet have not failed me*, Pſ. xvii. 37. The Prophet by theſe words intends to ſhew us how different the way of the virtuous is from that of the wicked, becauſe, whilſt the one walk with their hearts oppreſſed and ſtreightened by continual fears, ſolicitudes and apprehenſions, like a traveller that is going through a narrow path, with ſteep rocks and precipices on both ſides of him, the others, on the contrary, walk with a great deal of ſecurity and joy, like a man in a plain and open way that is in no apprehenſion of falling. The juſt underſtand this better by the practice than by the theory, as being ſenſible, by their own

own experience and the alteration they find in their own hearts, of the vaſt difference there is between the time they employed in the ſervice of the world, and what they ſpend now in the ſervice of God; for whilſt they ſerved the world, they were upon all occaſions full of troubles, ſolicitudes, jealouſies, fears and narrowneſs of heart, but now they have forſaken the world, and fixed their affections upon eternal goods, and placed all their happineſs and confidence in God, they are out of the reach of all theſe things, with a heart ſo open, ſo free, and ſo reſigned to the will of God, that they are often aſtoniſhed at ſuch a change, and cannot think themſelves the ſame they were before, or at leaſt they imagine they have new hearts, becauſe they find ſuch a change in them. And we may with truth affirm, that they are and are not the ſame perſons, for though they be the ſame in nature, they are not the ſame as to grace, which works this change, though no man can be aſſured of it.

9. This is what God himſelf promiſed by his prophet Iſaiah, when he ſaid, *When you ſhall go through the waters I will be with you, to ſave you from being drowned; and if you walk in the very midſt of a fire, you ſhall not be burned, nor ſhall the flame ſo much as ſcorch you*, Iſa. xliii. 2. Now what are *theſe waters* but the rivers of tribulations we ſuffer in this life, and the deluge of innumerable miſeries we meet with here every day? And what is *this fire* but the heat of our fleſh, which is the fiery furnace of Babylon, heated by Nebuchadnezzar's ſervants, that is, by the devils, from whence the flames of inordinate paſſions and appetites are continually breaking out? How can any man live in the midſt of this fire and water, which the whole world is perpetually in danger of, without receiving any hurt, and not be ſenſible at the ſame time that it was the preſence of the Holy Ghoſt and the aſſiſtance of God's grace that preſerved him? This is the peace which, as the Apoſtle ſays, *exceeds all imagination*, Philip. iv. 6. becauſe it is ſo noble and ſo ſupernatural a gift of God, that it is impoſſible for man's weak underſtanding to conceive of itſelf by what means a heart of fleſh ſhould come to enjoy ſuch content, ſuch quiet and ſuch a calm, amidſt the ſtorms and tempeſts of the world.

10. But he who enjoys this favour acknowledges and praiſes the author of theſe wonders, crying out with the Prophet, *Come and ſee the works of the Lord, and the miracles he has wrought upon the earth, making war ceaſe to the very remoteſt parts of the earth. He has ſnapped the bow and broken the arms,*

and

and thrown the ſhield in the fire, ſaying, Throw down your arms, and live in peace and quiet, that ſo you may know that I am the Lord, and will be exalted in Heaven and in earth, Pſ. xlv. 9, 10, 11. This being ſo, what can there be in the world more rich, more delightful, and more deſirable than this reſt, this repoſe, this effuſion and extenſion of heart, and this moſt happy peace?

11. But if you will go a little farther, and would know from what cauſe this heavenly gift proceeds, I anſwer, it proceeds from all thoſe other privileges and advantages of virtue we have before-mentioned; for as, in the chain of vice, the links are all one within another, ſo in the ladder of virtue they have all a dependence on and connection with one another, in ſuch manner that the higheſt, as it produces moſt fruit, ſo it has moſt roots to ſpring from. And thus this happy peace, which is one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghoſt, takes its riſe from thoſe other privileges we have before ſpoken of, but particularly from virtue itſelf, whoſe inſeparable companion it is. For as an outward reverence is naturally due to virtue, ſo is an inward tranquillity, being at the ſame time its effect and its reward. For ſince inward war, according to what we have already ſaid, is begun by the pride and diſturbance of the paſſions as ſoon as ever they are weakened by thoſe virtues, whoſe duty it is to ſubdue them, the very occaſions of theſe tumults and ſeditions are removed. And this is one of the three things by means whereof we partake of the happineſs of the kingdom of Heaven, even here upon earth. The Apoſtle, ſpeaking of them, ſays, *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but juſtice and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17. Where, by juſtice, according to the Hebrew way of ſpeaking, is to be underſtood, the very ſame virtue we are talking of; in which, together with theſe two admirable fruits, *peace* and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, conſiſts the felicity which virtuous men enjoy by advance in this life. And to prove that this peace is an effect of virtue, God Almighty himſelf ſays expreſly by Iſaiah, *Peace ſhall be the work of juſtice and ſilence, and everlaſting ſecurity the fruit of it; my people ſhall ſit in the beauty of peace and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in a plentiful reſt*, Iſa. xxxii. 17, 18. What he calls here *ſilence*, is nothing elſe but this ſame *inward peace*; that is, the repoſe of the paſſions which diſturb the ſilence of the ſoul, by the perpetual clamours of their irregular luſts.

12. The ſecond cauſe this peace proceeds from is the liberty of the ſoul, and the dominion it has over the paſſions above

ſpoken

ſpoken of. For juſt as when any country is brought under a foreign ſubjection, as ſoon as ever the inhabitants ſurrender themſelves, there is a general peace immediately, and every one ſits under his own fig-tree and under his own vine, without any fear of the enemy; ſo after the paſſions of the ſoul, which are the cauſes of all its diſquiets, are ſubjected to reaſon, there immediately follows in the ſoul an inward ſilence and peace, which makes it live free from all diſturbances imaginable. So that man being now free from their tyranny, and what is more, keeping them in ſubjection to him, there is nothing at all left to diſturb the peace he enjoys, though, on the contrary, whilſt the paſſions had the rule and maſtery, every thing was toſſed up and down, and the whole man in a general confuſion and diſorder.

13. The third cauſe of this peace is the greatneſs of ſpiritual conſolations that lull aſleep all the affections of our appetites, which, during that time, are content with what the ſuperior part of the ſoul is pleaſed to give them, becauſe the concupiſcible appetite, after having taſted how ſovereignly ſweet and delightful God is, makes him the object of all its wiſhes, and the iraſcible is quiet, becauſe its companion is ſatisfied; and thus the whole man enjoys an entire peace and happineſs, on account of his taſting the ſovereign good.

14. In the fourth place, this peace proceeds from the teſtimony and inward joy of a good conſcience, which makes the ſoul of a juſt man eaſy and quiet, though it does not give him any perfect aſſurance, for fear of making him negligent, and putting him in danger of loſing that holy fear which puts him forward.

15. Laſtly, this peace proceeds from the confidence juſt men have in Almighty God. It is this particularly that gives them the greateſt joy and comfort imaginable, even amidſt the miſeries of this life, becauſe it is the very anchor they truſt to, that is to ſay, becauſe they aſſure themſelves that they have God for their father, their deliverer, their defender and their ſhield, under whoſe protection they live in peace and happineſs, and have all the reaſon that can be to ſing with the Prophet, *I will lay me down and ſleep in peace, becauſe thou, O Lord, haſt ſecured me in a particular manner by the hope which I have in thy mercy*, Pſ. iv. It is from this hope that the peace of the juſt ſprings, and in this they find a remedy for all their evils. How then can any man be troubled that has ſo powerful a protector as God is?

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the ninth Privilege of Virtue, viz. *that God hears the Prayers of the Juſt, and rejects thoſe of the Wicked.*

1. ANOTHER extraordinary privilege virtuous men enjoy is, that God hears their prayers, which is a ſovereign remedy againſt all the neceſſities and miſeries of this life. To make this the plainer you are to underſtand, that there have been two univerſal deluges in the world, the one material, the other ſpiritual, but both of them cauſed by ſin. The material deluge which happened in Noah's time deſtroyed every thing in the world but the ark and what was within it, for every thing elſe was conſumed by the waters, ſo that all the labours and riches of mankind, together with the whole earth itſelf, was ſwallowed up by the ſea. But the other deluge which was before this, and which aroſe from the firſt ſin that ever was committed, was much more terrible and much greater than this was, becauſe it was the ruin not only of thoſe perſons who were alive at that time, but even of all ages paſt, preſent and to come. Nor is the hurt it does to the body to be compared with what it does to the ſoul, which it ſtrips and robs of all thoſe graces that were beſtowed on the whole world in the perſon of our firſt parent, as we may ſee in a young infant newly born, who comes into the world as bare of all theſe goods as it is of clothes to cover it.

2. From this firſt deluge flowed all thoſe miſeries and wants this mortal life is expoſed to, which are ſo many and ſo great that they have furniſhed a famous pope and doctor with matter to compoſe a book on this only ſubject. Innocentius de Vilitate conditionis humanæ. And ſeveral eminent philoſophers conſidering on the one ſide the excellency of man above all other creatures, and on the other the infinite number of miſeries and vices he is ſubject to, could not but wonder to ſee ſo much diſorder in the world, though they were not capable of finding out the cauſe of all theſe miſeries, which is nothing elſe but ſin. For they ſaw that man was the only creature in the world that had ſuch an infinite variety of carnal delights and pleaſures, that none but he was oppreſſed with avarice, with ambition and inſatiable deſire of life, care and ſolicitude about a funeral, but moſt of all, with a concern for that which muſt follow. They obſerved that no other creature had a more frail and uncertain life than man has, that

that none had a more enflamed luſt, none more ſubject to fear, and that without any ground, nor any one more cruelly angry or enraged than he. They took notice that other creatures ſpent the greateſt part of their lives without any ſickneſſes, or without being troubled with phyſicians and medicines. They ſaw them provided with all neceſſaries, without taking any pains or care. But as for unhappy miſerable man, they ſaw him expoſed to a thouſand ſorts of infirmities, accidents, neceſſities, misfortunes and pains, not only of the body, but of the ſoul, and as much diſturbed at the miſeries of his friends as at his own. They ſaw him ſorry for what was paſt, afflicted with the preſent, and painfully ſolicitous about what was to come, nay, very often toiling and ſweating all his lifetime for the poor ſuſtenance of a little bread and water.

3. If we were to reckon up all the miſeries of human life we ſhould never have done. Holy Job ſays, *The life of man is a perpetual warfare upon earth, and his days are like the days of an hired ſervant, that labours from ſun-riſing to ſun-ſet*, Job vii. 1, 2. Several of the old philoſophers had ſuch a lively ſenſe of this truth that ſome of them ſaid, they could not tell whether to call nature a mother or a ſtep-mother, becauſe ſhe has ſubjected us to ſo many miſeries. Others again uſed to ſay, it were better never to be born, or at leaſt to die as ſoon as we are born: nay, ſome of them have gone ſo far as to ſay, there are but few perſons that would accept of life after having made an experiment of it, that is, if it were poſſible to make a trial of it beforehand.

4. Since therefore life has been reduced to this miſerable condition by ſin, and ſince we have loſt our whole ſtock and ſubſtance in this firſt deluge, what remedy can we expect he has left us who has puniſhed us ſo ſeverely? If a man that is ſick and wounded were to be upon the ſea in a great ſtorm, and there loſe all he is worth, what could he look for afterwards, having loſt both his goods and his health, but beggary and want? Every man muſt make this caſe his own; for ſince there is no body but what has loſt all he was worth in this univerſal deluge, and is left ſo poor and naked, how can he help himſelf, but by crying like a poor beggar at the gates of God for relief and aſſiſtance? The holy king Joſaphat taught us this ſhift when he ſaid, *Since we do not know what we ought to do, we have one remedy left us at leaſt, which is to lift up our eyes, O Lord, towards thee.* 2 Paral. xx. 12. The good king Ezechias has inſtructed us fully upon the ſame point, when he ſaid, *In one day thou wilt put an end to my life, O Lord;*

O Lord; but as for me, I will cry like the young ſwallow, and moan like the dove. Iſa. xxxviii. 14. As if he had ſaid, I am ſo poor, O Lord, and have ſuch a dependence upon your mercy and providence that I cannot give myſelf any aſſurance of one day's life, and therefore all I have to truſt to is, to be always bemoaning myſelf before you like a dove, and to cry out to you as the young ſwallow does to its dam. Thus ſaid this holy man, though he was a great king; and king David his father, though he was much greater, made uſe of this ſame remedy in all his neceſſities; and therefore inſpired by the ſame ſpirit, and enlightened by the ſame knowledge, he ſays, *I have called upon thee with my voice, O Lord, and with my voice I have addreſſed my prayer to thee, O my God; I have ſought after God in the day of my tribulation, and I have ſtretched out my hands toward him in the night, when my ſoul refuſed to be comforted and when my ſpirit failed me,* Pſ. lxxvi. 1, 2, 3. that is to ſay, when I look round about me and ſee all the paſſages of hope ſhut up, when nothing upon earth can give me any eaſe, I immediately ſeek for a remedy from Heaven by the help of prayer, which is the ſovereign cure God has given me for all my ills.

5. You will aſk me perhaps, whether this is a certain and univerſal cure for all the neceſſities of life or not? This being a ſecret which depends entirely upon the will of God, there is no body can anſwer it but thoſe whom he has made choice of to diſcover his will, which are the apoſtles and prophets: one of them ſays, *There is no nation in the world ſo great, which have their gods ſo near them, as our God is near us, when we pray to him.* Deut. iv. 7. They are the words of God himſelf, though delivered by the mouth of a man, and they aſſure us, with all the certainty imaginable, that as often as we pray, though we ſee nobody and though nobody anſwers us, that we do not ſpeak to the walls or talk to the air, but that God is preſent with us and hears all we ſay, that he aſſiſts us in our prayers, that he pities our miſeries and prepares the remedy we aſk for, in caſe it be proper for us. What greater comfort can a man have when he is at his prayers than ſuch a certain pledge of God Almighty's aſſiſtance? And if this alone is ſufficient to encourage and comfort us, how much more will the words of our Saviour be, and thoſe aſſurances he has given us in his goſpel, where he ſays, *Aſk and you ſhall receive, ſeek and you ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened to you.* Mat. vii. 7 Luke xi. 9. Can we have a richer token than this is? can any man doubt of the truth of theſe words? who is there that, as often as he goes to his prayers, is not comforted with the hope of this royal promiſe?

6. This

6. This therefore is one of the greateſt privileges the virtuous enjoy in this life, to know that theſe promiſes are made particularly for them. For one of the greateſt favours God beſtows on them, in reward of their obedience and loyalty, is, that he will be near them and hear the prayers they addreſs to him. David aſſures us of it, when he ſays, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the juſt, and his ears are open to their prayers*, Pſ. xxxvi. 16. And God himſelf promiſes us the ſame by Iſaiah, ſaying, *Then* (that is to ſay, when you ſhall have kept my commandments) *you ſhall call upon the Lord, and he will hear you; you ſhall call out to him, and he will ſay, behold I am here*, Iſ. lviii. 9. that is, I am ready to grant whatever you ſhall deſire. Nay, more than this, he promiſes them by the ſame Prophet to hear them, not only when they call upon him, but even long before. And yet after all, none of theſe promiſes come any thing near that which we read in St. John, where our Saviour ſays, *If you ſhall remain in me and let my words remain in you, you ſhall aſk whatever you ſhall have a mind for, and it ſhall be granted you.* John xv. 7. But for fear this promiſe, as being ſo noble, ſhould be more than any man could believe, he repeats it a ſecond time, and affirms it more poſitively, ſaying, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that whatſoever you ſhall deſire of my father in my name he ſhall give it you*, John xvi. 24. Can there be any greater favour, any greater riches, or any more ſovereign command than this is? You ſhall aſk me, ſays he, for whatever you pleaſe, and it ſhall be granted you. Could any expreſſion better become the perſon that promiſes than this does? who but God could ever have made ſuch a promiſe? is there any body beſides God that is able to do ſuch great things as theſe are? or is there any one but him that has ſo much goodneſs as to oblige himſelf to grant ſuch favours? what elſe is this but to make man in ſome meaſure lord of all things, and to entruſt him with the keys of the divine treaſuries? All the other favours of God have their bounds ſet them, but this, above all the reſt, as being the royal gift of an infinite Lord, carries ſome degree of infinity along with it. For our Saviour does not determine either this or that, or any particular thing, but *whatever you ſhall deſire*, provided it be for your eternal good, *ſhall be granted you.* Could men but ſet a juſt value upon things, and give them their true eſtimate, how great a rate would they eſteem this at? how happy would a man think himſelf to have ſo great an intereſt with his king as to obtain his grant for every thing he ſhould deſire? Now

if

if a man would look upon it as ſo great a happineſs to be ſo much in favour with an earthly king, what muſt he think it is to have ſo much intereſt with the king of Heaven?

7. And that you may not think theſe are only bare promiſes, without performance, do but look into the Lives of the Saints, and conſider what great things they have done by the virtue of prayer. What did Moſes in Egypt and during all the time of his travels through the wilderneſs? what did not Elias and Eliſeus his diſciple? what miracles were not wrought by the apoſtles, and all by prayer? This was the weapon the ſaints fought with, with this they overcame the devil, with this they triumphed over the world, with this they ſubdued nature, with this they turned the moſt violent flames into a gentle dew, with this, in fine, they appeaſed and quieted the wrath of God, and obtained of him whatever they aſked. It is written of our holy father St. Dominick, that he told a certain friend of his he was never in his life denied any thing he had begged of God Almighty; his friend deſired him to pray that one Doctor Reginald, a man famous at that time, might become a religious man of his order. The holy man ſpent the next night in prayer for him, and the next day early in the morning, as he was beginning the hymn of the firſt hour, *Jam Lucis orto Sidere.* This new morning-ſtar came into the choir, and there proſtrating himſelf at the ſaint's feet, deſired, with a great deal of humility, that he would give him the habit of his order. This therefore is the reward that is promiſed to the obedience of the juſt, and it is their faithful obſerving the voice of God that makes him in ſome manner obedient to their prayers; and becauſe they anſwer to the call of God, *he pays them again,* according to the Proverb, *in the ſame coin,* by anſwering them whenever they call upon him. And for this reaſon Solomon ſays, *That the obedient man ſhall talk of victories,* Prov. xxi. 28. For it is but juſt that God comply with the will of man, when man complies with the will of God.

8. But it happens quite otherwiſe in the prayers of the wicked; for God Almighty tells them by Iſaiah, *When you ſhall ſtretch out your hands, I will turn my eyes away from you: and when you ſhall multiply your prayers, I will not hear them,* Iſa. i. 15. He threatens them in like manner by his prophet Jeremy, ſaying, *In the time of their affliction they ſhall ſay, ariſe, O Lord, and deliver us.* And he will aſk them, *Where are your gods, which you made for yourſelves? Let them ariſe and deliver you in the time of your affliction.* Jer. ii. 27. In the book

book of Job we read theſe words: *What hopes can the wicked man have if he unjuſtly take away his neighbour's goods? can he hope that God will hear his prayer when he ſhall be in diſtreſs?* Job xxvii. 8, 9. And St. John, in his Epiſtle, ſays, *My beloved brethren, if our own conſciences do not reprove us, we have a confidence in God, that whatſoever we ſhall aſk we ſhall obtain of him, becauſe we keep his commandments and do thoſe things which are pleaſing in his ſight.* John iii. 21, 22. What the holy Pſalmiſt ſays, is to the ſame effect: *If I have beheld iniquity, the Lord will not hear me; but becauſe I have not done wickedly, therefore he has heard my prayer,* Pſ. lxv. 18, 19.

9. There are infinite examples of this ſort in holy writ, to ſhow you what vaſt difference there is between the prayers of the juſt and thoſe of the wicked, and conſequently the extraordinary advantages which the one have over the other; becauſe the juſt are heard and dealt with as true children of God, whilſt the wicked are treated as enemies. And what a wonder is it that their prayers ſhould not be heard ſince there are no good works, no devotion, no fervour of ſpirit, no humility to accompany them? For, according to St. Cyprian, "It is impoſſible that a petition ſhould be efficacious when prayer is barren." St. Cypr. &c. Orat. Dominica. Though this is generally true, God Almighty's goodneſs is yet ſo great that he ſometimes vouchſafes to hear the prayers of the wicked, which notwithſtanding their want of merit do not ceaſe to obtain their end; becauſe, as St. Thomas ſays, "Merit proceeds from charity, but the grant of the petition comes from the infinite goodneſs and mercy of God, who ſometimes hears the prayers of ſuch perſons." St. Tho. 2. 2. q. 83. art. 15, 16.

CHAP. XI.

Of the tenth Privilege of Virtue, which is the Aſſiſtance good Men receive from God in their Afflictions; and of the Impatience, on the contrary, with which the Wicked ſuffer theirs.

1. ANOTHER extraordinary privilege granted to virtue is, its encouraging its followers to bear up againſt the tribulations they cannot but meet with in this life. For we know there is no ſea ſo tempeſtuous and inconſtant as this life is, becauſe a man is never ſo ſecure of the felicity he enjoys,

joys, as not to be expoſed to an infinite number of ſuch accidents and misfortunes as he never thought of, and which he is nevertheleſs every moment in danger of falling into. It is therefore a matter of great conſequence to obſerve with what difference the wicked and the good behave themſelves in all theſe changes; for the good, conſidering they have God for their father, that it is he who ſends them this cup as a potion preſcribed them by a moſt experienced phyſician for their cure, that tribulation is like a file which fetches off the ruſt of ſin the cleaner, and poliſhes it the brighter the rougher it is, they conſider it is this affliction that makes man more humble in his thoughts, more devout in his prayers, and gives him a purer conſcience. Theſe conſiderations make them bow down their heads, and humble themſelves with cheerfulneſs in the time of their tribulation; they put water into the chalice of the croſs, or, to ſpeak plainer, God Almighty himſelf puts it in; *For he*, as the holy Pſalmiſt ſays, *gives them tears to drink by meaſure*, Pſ. xcvii. 6. And there is no phyſician ſo careful in the mixture of his drugs, according to the conſtitution of his patient, as this heavenly phyſician is in the tempering of tribulations which he ſends the juſt, according to the ſtrength every one has to bear them; and if at any time the burthen ſhould be increaſed, he increaſes the aſſiſtance he gives them for bearing of it, that ſo the tribulation any man lies under may make him ſo much the richer as it is the more painful and troubleſome; nay, when his afflictions are tempered thus, he is ſo far from endeavouring to get rid of them as things prejudicial, that he, on the contrary, longs for them as very advantageous and profitable. So that by the help of all theſe conſiderations good men very often bear their neceſſities, not only with patience but with pleaſure, becauſe they look upon the reward, and not the labour, upon the crown, and not the ſuffering, upon the health their phyſic will reſtore them to, and not upon the potion itſelf, not upon the ſmart of the ſtroke, but upon the love of him that lays it on, who has already ſaid, *That he loves thoſe that he chaſtiſes*, Heb. iii. 19.

2. To all theſe conſiderations muſt be added God Almighty's grace, which, as we have ſhewn already, is never wanting to a juſt man in the time of his tribulation. For God being ſo true a friend to thoſe that love him, he is never nearer to them than when they are in affliction, though he ſeems then to be fartheſt from them. If you doubt of the truth hereof, do but look into the holy ſcriptures, and you will ſee nothing ſo frequently repeated or ſo often promiſed. Who does the royal Prophet

Prophet mean but God, when he ſays, *That he is their helper in their neceſſities and tribulation*, Pſ. ix. 10. Has not he himſelf commanded all perſons to call upon him during the time of their affliction, ſaying, *Call upon me in the day of tribulation, and I will deliver you, and you ſhall glorify me?* Pſ. xlix. 15. Has not the Prophet teſtified this upon his own experience, when he ſays, *When I called, the God of my juſtice heard me, he has enlarged my heart in the day of tribulation?* Pſ. iv. 1. Is not this the Lord in whom the Prophet placed all his truſt, ſaying, *I expected him who has preſerved me from weakneſs of ſpirit and from the ſtorm?* Pſ. liv. 9. It is certain that he does not ſpeak here of any ſtorm at ſea, but of that ſtorm which the heart of a negligent and weak man that is in tribulation is toſſed with, and the more a man's heart is confined, the more boiſterouſly this ſtorm rages, which the Prophet often repeats, for the greater confirmation of this truth and for the ſtrengthening of our weakneſs. *The ſalvation of the juſt*, ſays he, *comes from the Lord, and he is their protector in the time of their tribulation; and he will aſſiſt them and deliver them, and reſcue them from ſinners, and ſave them, becauſe they have put their truſt in him*, Pſ. xxxvi. 39, 40.

3. In another place the ſame Prophet ſpeaks yet plainer thus: *How great, O Lord, and how many are the joys thou haſt laid up for thoſe that fear thee and put their truſt in thee in the preſence of the children of men? Thou wilt hide them in the ſecret of thy face from the perſecution of men: Thou wilt protect them in thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues. Bleſſed be the Lord who has ſhewed his mercy towards me in ſo wonderful a manner, by defending and ſecuring me as if I had been in a fortified town. But the afflictions which I have been overwhelmed with have made me cry out, O Lord, I am turned out of thy ſight*, Pſ. xxx. 20, 21, 22, 23. See here how plainly this holy Prophet has taught us how God aſſiſts the juſt in their moſt preſſing neceſſities. But you muſt here take particular notice of theſe words, *Thou wilt hide them in the ſecret of thy face*; for by this, according to a certain interpreter, we are given to underſtand, that as the kings of the earth, when they have a mind to protect any perſon with a more than ordinary care, keep him within their own palaces, that ſo not only the royal walls may ſecure him from his enemies, but that the king's continual preſence and the watchful eye he has over him may be his ſecurity, than which none can be greater: in like manner this ſovereign King uſes the ſame care for the ſecuring of thoſe he loves. In confirmation of this we both ſee and read

that

that holy men, even in the midſt of the greateſt dangers and temptations, ſtill kept the ſame calmneſs and evenneſs of ſpirit as they had before, without ſhewing the leaſt concern or trouble in their looks, becauſe they knew for certain that he who protected them would be ſo faithful as not to forſake them, nay, on the contrary, that he would ſtand the nearer to them if he ſhould ſee them in any greater danger. Juſt as he did to the three young men whom Nebuchadnezzer commanded to be flung into the fiery furnace of Babylon, Dan. iii. For the angel of the Lord was ſeen walking in the midſt of them, and changed the violent flames into a cool and refreſhing air. At which the tyrant being aſtoniſhed, began to ſay, *Were they not three men that we bound and flung into the middle of the fire? behold I ſee four untied and walking together without having received any hurt, and the fourth of them is as beautiful as the ſon of God*, Ibid. ver. 24. 25. Do you not ſee now by this how certain it is that Almighty God is with the juſt, whenever they are in any tribulation? Nor is the care he took of young Joſeph, after brothers had ſold him, a leſs argument of this truth. For as we may read in the book of Wiſdom, *He went down with him into the priſon, and never left him when he was in his fetters, till he gave him the ſceptre of Egypt and power over thoſe perſons who had oppreſſed him: and he proved thoſe to be liars that defamed him, and he gave him eternal glory*, Sap. x. 13. 14. Theſe examples evince the truth of God's promiſe made to us by the Pſalmiſt, when he ſays, *I am with him when he is in affliction; I will deliver him and glorify him*, Pſ. xc. 15. O how truly happy muſt affliction be that makes us worthy of the company of our God! Let us all cry out, with S. Bernard, "If theſe are the effects of tribulations, grant, O God, that I may never be free from them, that ſo you may be always with me." Serm. 17. in Pſ. xc.

4. Add to this, the relief and aſſiſtance of all virtues which, upon ſuch occaſions, come in ready armed to ſuccour the afflicted heart. For whenever the ſoul is ſtraitened, or in any kind of danger from tribulation, all the virtues immediately run into her, and with what forces they can make, juſt as the blood does toward the heart whenever it is oppreſſed. In the firſt place, in comes *faith*, with a certain knowledge of the happineſs and miſeries of the next life, compared to which all we can poſſibly ſuffer here is but a mere trifle. Next comes *hope*, which makes man bear all his troubles with patience, in expectation of the reward that is to follow. After her comes *charity*, which makes them even deſire to be afflicted in this world, that they may thereby expreſs their affection for God.

Then

Then follows *obedience* and *conformity* to the Divine will, which helps them to receive whatever God ſends them, with cheerfulneſs and without grumbling. *Patience* repairs thither, and it is her buſineſs to keep their ſhoulders up, for fear they ſhould bend beneath the weight. Then *humility* bows down their hearts, like young trees, by the ſtormy wind of affliction, teaching them to humble themſelves under the powerful hand of God, and to acknowledge that what they ſuffer is infinitely leſs than their ſins deſerve. Another virtue that aſſiſts them is, the conſideration of what Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered upon the croſs, and of what all the ſaints have endured, which is far more ſevere and painful than what they ſuſtain.

5. Thus all virtues officiouſly aſſiſt us in ſuch dangerous encounters; nor do they aſſiſt us in their ſervice only, but with their words, if I may be allowed to term it ſo. For, firſt of all, faith tells us, *That the ſufferings of this world are not worthy of the glory which will be revealed to us in the next*, Rom. viii. 18. Charity comforts us, ſaying, it is but reaſonable we ſhould ſuffer ſomething for his ſake who had ſuch love for us. Gratitude tells us, with holy Job, *If we have received good things from the hand of God, why ſhould we not receive bad ones too?* Job ii. 10. Penance ſays, it is no more than juſtice that he who has done ſo much againſt God's will ſhould undergo ſomething now againſt his own. Loyalty ſays, it is requiſite that we ſhould, once at leaſt in our life, give ſome token of our fidelity to him, who has been beſtowing his favours upon us ever ſince we were born. Patience tells us, *That tribulation produces patience, patience the proof of our faith, the proof of our faith produces hope, and that hope will not leave a man in confuſion*, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. Obedience ſays, the higheſt degree of ſanctity a man can arrive to, and the moſt pleaſing ſacrifice he can offer up to God, is to conform in all his ſufferings to his will.

6. But that which of all theſe virtues helps us moſt upon ſuch occaſions, and which makes us moſt reſolute in the very midſt of tribulations is, a lively hope. It is what St. Paul himſelf teaches us, for he has no ſooner ſaid, *rejoicing in hope*, than he adds, *being patient in tribulation*. He knew very well that one is a conſequence of the other, that is to ſay, that the ſtrength we get by patience proceeds from the joy hope gives us. For which reaſon the Apoſtle very elegantly calls this hope *an anchor*, Heb. vi. 19. becauſe *this lively hope* being faſtened very ſtrongly to the promiſes of Heaven, it keeps the ſoul of the juſt man firm and conſtant, in the midſt of the waves and ſtorms of this world, and makes it ſlight the violence of its winds and tempeſts,

juſt as an anchor, when it is ſtuck into the ground, makes the ſhip ride ſecurely upon the water, and keeps it ſteady, though the winds and waves are continually beating againſt it. This, they ſay, was the practice of a certain ſaint, who, whenever he was in any kind of affliction, uſed to ſay, "The happineſs I hope for is ſo great, that all I can ſuffer is delightful to me."

7. Thus it is that all virtues meet and agree together, for fortifying a juſt man's heart, whenever he is in any tribulation. And if at any time he ſhould loſe courage, they come up to him again with much more vigour, and upbraid him after this manner:—How now, what is become of that lively faith and confidence you ought to have in Almighty God, if you begin to ſhrink at the very time that he is going to make a trial of you and to ſee what you are? Where is your charity, your courage, your obedience, your patience, your loyalty, and the fervour of your hope? Is it for this that you have ſo often prepared yourſelf, and made ſo many reſolutions? Is this all you have deſired ſo earneſtly of God, and prayed ſo often to him for? Conſider a little, that the duty and perfection of a good chriſtian does not conſiſt in ſaying a few prayers, in faſting, and in hearing of maſs; it is neceſſary beſides all this that God ſhould find you as faithful as another Job, or Abraham, in the time of tribulation. Such conſiderations as theſe, and the virtues a juſt man is endowed with, together with God Almighty's never-failing grace, make him ſtrong enough to bear thoſe burthens, not only with patience but very often with thankfulneſs and pleaſure. Holy Tobias's example will ſuffice at preſent to make this out; we read of him, that God having permitted that he ſhould loſe his ſight, after having ſuffered a great many other afflictions, for an example of patience to men in after ages, he was not troubled at all, nor did he loſe the leaſt part of that fidelity and obedience he paid to God before theſe miſfortunes happened to him. Whereupon the ſcripture immediately gives the reaſon of it, ſaying, *Having had the fear of God before his eyes from his very infancy, and having kept his commandments, he did not murmur againſt him, becauſe he had ſtruck him with blindneſs, but remained immoveable in the fear of God, giving him thanks all the days of his life*, Tob. ii. 13, 14. You ſee now by this how plainly the Holy Ghoſt attributes the patience, with which a man ſuffers afflictions, to virtue and the fear of God, which, as the ſcripture has declared, this holy man was ſo famous for. I could bring ſeveral remarkable inſtances of holy men and women, even in our days, who have undergone all the troubles God has ſent them with a great deal of cheerfulneſs

neſs and love, who have found out honey even in gall, who in a ſtorm had a calm, and have been refreſhed and cooled in the very midſt of the flames of Babylon.

SECTION.

Of the Impatience and Rage of the Wicked in their Afflictions.

8. But, on the contrary, how dreadful a thing is it to ſee the wicked in any trouble? to ſee them without charity, patience, courage, hope or any ſuch virtue? to ſee how all their miſeries come upon them, unarmed and unprepared? to ſee how blind they are, and how unable to behold that which the juſt ſee by a ſteady faith? to conſider they have no lively hope to embrace what God ſends them, nor have ever had any experience of his fatherly providence towards thoſe that ſerve him? It is a lamentable thing to ſee how they are ſwallowed up in this gulph, without finding any place to reſt upon or to lay hold of. What better hopes can a man have of them than that they ſhould periſh in the ſtorm or be killed in the battle, ſince they have no kind of aſſiſtance to truſt to, becauſe they ſail without a rudder and fight without weapons? What can a man expect but that the fury of the winds and the tempeſt of their afflictions ſhould daſh them againſt the rocks of anger, pride, dejection, impatience, blaſphemy and deſpair? Some there are who, through the exceſs of their miſeries have loſt either their ſenſes, their health, or their life, or at leaſt their ſight, by their continual tears. So that the juſt remain ſound and entire in the fire of adverſity, like fine ſilver, whilſt the wicked, like lead, melt and are diſſolved as ſoon as they feel the heat. Thus whilſt the one cry the others ſing, whilſt the one are ſinking the others paſs over dry-ſhod; the one, like frail earthen veſſels, crack in the fire, whilſt the others, like pure gold, are the more refined. So that *the voice of ſalvation and of joy is continually ſounding in the tabernacles of the juſt*, Pſ. cxvii. 15. whilſt there is nothing to be heard in the habitations of the wicked but the voices of ſorrow and confuſion.

9. If you would more fully comprehend what I ſay, do but obſerve what extravagancies ſeveral ladies daily commit upon the death of their children or huſbands, and you will find ſome of them hiding themſelves in dark places where they may never ſee the light again; others ſhut themſelves up in cages like wild beaſts. Some have thrown themſelves headlong into the midſt of the flames; others, out of madneſs and rage and the horror they have of this life, daſh out their brains againſt the

walls; others that ſoon end their days with impatience and fury, cauſed by their grief; and thus a family is ruined and deſtroyed in a moment. And what is worſt of all, they are not only in a paſſion with and cruel to themſelves, but pour out horrible execrations againſt Almighty God, accuſing his providence, condemning his juſtice, blaſpheming his mercy, and opening their ſacrilegious mouths againſt Heaven, nay, and againſt God himſelf, till at length all their curſes fall on their own heads, with many other calamities much more dreadful, wherewith Almighty God puniſhes them for ſuch horrible blaſphemies. This is the reward he deſerves who is ſo impudent as to ſpit at heaven itſelf, and to kick againſt the ſpur. Sometimes this proves a very complete cure, wrought by the hand of God, who thus diverts their hearts from ſome extraordinary afflictions, by ſending them others that are greater.

10. Thus theſe miſerable creatures, wanting the rudder of virtue to ſteer their veſſels, are caſt away in the ſtorm, for blaſpheming and curſing him they ought to praiſe and bleſs, for being puft up with pride when they ought to humble themſelves, for being ſtubborn when they are chaſtiſed, and growing worſe upon thoſe remedies which were applied to make them better, which ſeems to be a beginning of their hell, and a reſemblance of that they are to endure in the next world. For if hell be nothing but a place of ſin and puniſhment, why ſhould we not look upon this ſtate as a hell, ſince it has ſo great a ſhare of both?

11. But what pity is it that ſtill theſe troubles muſt be endured, and that if they were borne with patience they would become more tolerable, and at the ſame time more meritorious, and yet, in ſpite of all this, wretched man is reſolved to deprive himſelf of the ineſtimable fruit of patience, and to encreaſe the weight of his burden, by adding the burden of impatience, which alone is much heavier than all the reſt of the load. It is a great trouble to labour and toil, and to receive no reward, nor know whoſe account to place it to, but it is much worſe to loſe all that is got, and after travelling all night, to be further from the journey's end in the morning.

12. By what has been ſaid, we may perceive the difference there is between the uſe the good and the bad make of their afflictions. With what peace, what joy, and what courage do the good bear theirs, whilſt the wicked are quite overwhelmed with grief and trouble? This was repreſented to the life by the great lamentations and complaints which were heard throughout the land of Egypt, when God deſtroyed all their firſt born in one night, Exod. xii. for there was not a houſe free from grief

and

and ſorrow; and yet there was no cry heard in the land of Jeſſen, where the children of Iſrael lived.

13. Beſides this peace, what ſhall I ſay of the advantage the juſt make of tribulations which are ſo prejudicial to the wicked? St. Chryſoſtom ſays, "that as gold is refined by the ſame fire which conſumes wood, ſo the juſt man, like gold, becomes more pure in the fire of tribulation, whilſt the wicked, like dry wood, is burned to aſhes." S. Chryſoſtom. 14. in Matt. to. 1. St. Cyprian has ſomething to the ſame purpoſe: he ſays, "that as the wind in harveſt time blows away the light chaff, but cleanſes the corn, ſo the wind of tribulation blows away the wicked like light ſtraw, but purges the juſt, and gathers them together like good wheat," Cypr. de unitate Eccleſiæ. The ſame is repreſented to us by the waters of the Red-Sea, which were ſo far from drowning the children of Iſrael as they paſſed through them, that on the contrary, they ſerved them for a wall on the right hand and on the left: whereas they broke down upon, and drowned the Egyptian's chariots and all Pharaoh's army. The waters of tribulation, after the ſame manner, are a greater ſecurity to virtuous men, and ſerve as the preſervatives and trial of their humility and patience; but are like a tempeſtuous ſea to the wicked, which drowns and buries them in the abyſs of impatience, blaſphemy and deſpair.

14. This therefore is another very conſiderable advantage virtue has over vice; and it was on this account that the philoſophers cried up philoſophy ſo much, imagining that the making of a man conſtant and reſolute in all kind of adverſities belonged only to it. But they deceived themſelves in this point, as they did in many others, for neither true virtue nor true reſolution and conſtancy are to be found among the philoſophers, but in the ſchool of that maſter, who, being nailed to a croſs, comforted us by his example, and reigning now in heaven ſtrengthens us by his ſpirit, and encourages us with the hopes of the glory he has promiſed us; all which human philoſophy is incapable of.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

The eleventh Privilege of Virtue, which conſiſts in the Care God takes to ſupply the Temporal Neceſſities of the Juſt.

1. ALL we have hitherto treated of are the ſpiritual favours which are beſtowed upon the followers of virtue in this life, beſides the everlaſting glory which is laid up for them in the next. Theſe benefits were all promiſed them at our Saviour's coming into the world, as all the propheſies in the holy ſcriptures teſtify; for which reaſon he is juſtly ſtiled *the Saviour of the world*, becauſe, it is by him we obtain true ſalvation, which is, grace, wiſdom, peace, victory and dominion over our paſſions, the conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, the riches of hope, and, in fine, all other benefits requiſite for the obtaining of this ſalvation, of which the Prophet has ſaid, *Iſrael has been ſaved by the Lord with an eternal ſalvation*, Iſai. xlv. 17.

But if there be any perſon ſo carnal as to have a greater love for the goods of the fleſh than for thoſe of the ſpirit, as the Jews had, we will not differ on this account, for he ſhall herein find more ſatisfaction as to this part than he can poſſibly wiſh. For what elſe could the wiſe man mean when, ſpeaking of true wiſdom, in which the perfection of virtue conſiſts, he ſays, *Length of days is at her right hand, and riches and glory at her left*, Prov. iii. 16. So that ſhe holds theſe two ſorts of goods in her hands, inviting men with one of them to the enjoyment of eternal bleſſings, and with the other to a ſearch after temporal. Do not imagine that God ſtarves thoſe that ſerve him, or that he is ſo careleſs as to feed the very ant, and worms of the earth, and ſuffer them to want. If you will not believe me, read the ſixth chapter of St. Matthew, and there you will ſee what earneſt and ſecurity he has given you. *Behold the fowls of the air*, ſays our Saviour, *for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you much better than they are*, Matth. vi. 26. A little after he concludes thus: *Do not therefore be ſolicitous, ſaying, what ſhall we eat or what ſhall we drink, or what clothes ſhall we put on? for the heathens trouble themſelves about all theſe things. Do you therefore ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and all theſe things ſhall be given to you*, ver. 31, 32, 33. It is for this reaſon particularly that the holy Pſalmiſt, obſerving that this alone was a ſufficient motive to make men ſubmit to one another, invites

invites us to ſerve God, ſaying, *Fear the Lord, all you his ſaints; becauſe thoſe that fear him want for nothing. The rich have been in want, and have ſuffered hunger, but thoſe that ſeek the Lord ſhall not be deprived of any thing that is good,* Pſ. xxxiii. 10, 11. This is ſo certain that the ſame prophet adds in another Pſalm, *I have been young, but now am old; yet I never ſaw the juſt man forſaken, nor his ſeed begging bread,* Pſ. xxxvi. 25.

2. If you would be better informed of the ſhare the juſt have in this promiſe, hear what God himſelf ſays, in the book of Deuteronomy, ch. xxviii. 1—13, to thoſe that keep his commandments. *If you will hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, ſo as to obſerve and keep all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will exalt you above all the nations upon the face of the earth. And all theſe bleſſings ſhall come upon you, and ſhall ſeize you, if you will only hear his precepts. You ſhall be bleſſed in the city, and bleſſed in the field. Bleſſed ſhall be the fruit of your womb, and the fruits of your land, your herds of cattle, and your ſheep-folds. Bleſſed ſhall you be your barns and your ſtores. Bleſſed ſhall you be both at your going out, and at your coming in. The Lord will make your enemies that riſe up againſt you fall down at your feet. They ſhall come againſt you one way, and they ſhall fly away from you ſeven ways. The Lord will ſend forth his bleſſings upon your cellars, and upon all the works of your hands, and he will bleſs you in the land which you ſhall receive. The Lord will make you a ſanctified people for himſelf, as he has ſworn to you, if you will keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. All the people of the earth ſhall ſee that the name of the Lord is called upon by you, and they ſhall be afraid of you. The Lord will make you abound in all good things, in the fruit of your womb, and in the fruit of your cattle, in the fruits of your land, which the Lord has ſworn to your fathers that he will give you. The Lord will open all his treaſures of heaven, that he may make it rain upon your land in its proper ſeaſon, and he will bleſs all the labours of your hands.* Theſe are the words of God himſelf, delivered by his Prophet. Tell me now, after all this, are the treaſures of both the Indies to be compared with ſuch infinite bleſſings as theſe are?

3. But ſuppoſing the promiſe of temporal bleſſings was made to the Jews, rather than to Chriſtians, becauſe God Almighty, by Ezekiel, ch. xxxiv. xxxvi. promiſes to enrich theſe with other kind of goods of greater value, to wit, thoſe of grace and glory; yet as God in the carnal law did not ceaſe to give ſpiritual goods to thoſe Jews that were virtuous, ſo neither will he refuſe to give temporal bleſſings to good Chriſtians in the ſpiritual law, and that with the addition of two extraordi-

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nary advantages, which the wicked have not the leaſt knowledge of. The one is, that he gives them theſe ſorts of bleſſings like an experienced phyſician, according to their ſeveral neceſſities, that ſo they may ſerve to ſupport and not puff them up. The wicked know nothing at all of this, for they heap up all they can, without conſidering that ſuperfluity of temporal goods is no leſs prejudicial to the welfare of the ſoul, than ſuperfluity of meats is to the health of the body. For though a man cannot naturally live without eating, yet to eat too much impairs the health, and though man's life is in his blood, yet too much of it quite choaks him up. The other advantage is, that with leſs noiſe he gives them much more content and ſatisfaction, which is the end of mens ſeeking after temporal riches, than the others can purchaſe with all their ſtories; becauſe whatſoever God can do by the means of ſecond cauſes, he can do by himſelf, and much more perfectly. It is what he has done to all the ſaints, in whoſe names St. Paul ſpoke, when he ſaid, *As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. becauſe we are as content with the little we have, as if we were lords of all the world. Travellers endeavour to carry what money they have in gold, becauſe they can carry much more, and with leſs burthen; ſo God Almighty provides for thoſe that love him, by giving them a lighter burthen, but much more of joy, eaſe and ſatisfaction. Thus the juſt travel in this life naked and contented, poor and rich, whilſt the wicked wallow in their riches, and yet die for hunger. And though, like Tantalus, they are up to the very chin in water, yet they cannot quench their thirſt.

4. For this and ſuch like reaſons Moſes ſo earneſtly recommended the keeping of the law of God, deſiring it ſhould be our whole ſtudy and care, as well knowing that all happineſs conſiſted in the fulfilling thereof. *Lay up theſe words of mine*, ſays he, *in thy heart; teach them thy children, and meditate upon them as thou ſitteſt in thy houſe, and as thou art upon journies, when thou goeſt to bed, and when thou riſeſt again. And thou ſhalt bind them as a ſign on thy hand, and keep them always before thy eyes, and write them over thy porch and over the doors of thy houſe, that by this means thy days may be multiplied, and thoſe of thy poſterity, in the land which God ſhall give thee*, Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8, &c. What was it, O holy Prophet, that you ſaw, what did you find in the keeping of God's commandments, that ſhould make you recommend them ſo earneſtly to others? you, without doubt, underſtood the ineſtimable value of this good, as being ſo great a prophet and privy to the divine counſels: you knew that all kind

kind of goods whatever, preſent and to come, temporal and eternal, ſpiritual and corporal, were contained in and depended on this, and that if we complied with this obligation, we ſhould ſatisfy all the reſt: you knew very well that he who made it his buſineſs to do the will of God, ſhould never loſe his labour, becauſe the doing of this was pruning his vine, watering of his garden, encreaſing his eſtate, and looking after all his affairs, much better than he could do it himſelf, becauſe it laid an obligation on God to do it for him. For the condition of the treaty which God has made with man is, that whilſt man is buſy about keeping of God's law, God ſhould be buſy about looking after man's concerns. And there is no fear of the contract being broken on God's ſide. On the contrary, if man prove a faithful ſervant, God will ſtill ſhew himſelf a better maſter. This is that one thing which our Saviour ſaid was neceſſary, to wit, the knowing and the loving of God. For he that knows how to pleaſe God, is ſecure of all the reſt. *Piety*, ſays St. Paul, *is profitable for all things, becauſe all the promiſes, both of this life and of the life to come, are for it*, Tim. iii. 8. You ſee here how plainly the Apoſtle promiſes to piety, which is the worſhip of God, not only the goods of the next, but thoſe of this life too, as far as they contribute to the gaining of eternal happineſs, and yet man is not excuſed upon this account from labour or from complying with the obligations of his ſtate of calling as far he is able.

SECTION.

Of the Poverty of the Wicked.

5. If any body deſires to know what poverty, what afflictions and calamities are laid up for the wicked, let him but read the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and he will there ſee ſuch things as will aſtoniſh and frighten him; where, amongſt many other dreadful threats, Moſes delivers theſe moſt terrifying words from the mouth of God: *If you will not hear the voice of the Lord your God, nor keep his commandments and obſerve his ceremonies, all theſe curſes ſhall light upon you, and ſhall ſurpriſe you. You ſhall be curſed in the city, and curſed in the field. Your barns ſhall be curſed, and all that you leave ſhall be curſed. Curſed ſhall the fruit of your womb be, the fruits of your land, your herds of oxen and your flocks of ſheep. You ſhall be curſed when you come in, and curſed when you go out. The Lord will ſend famine and hunger amongſt you, and will confound all the works of your hands, until be ruin and deſtroy you, becauſe of your moſt wicked inventions in which you have forſaken him. The Lord will ſend you a peſtilence which*

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ſhall drive you out of the land you are going to poſſeſs. He will chaſtiſe you with poverty, with fevers, with cold, with ſcorching heats, with the infection of the air, and with mildews, and he will purſue you till you periſh. Let the heaven which is above you be of braſs, and the earth which you tread upon of iron, God will cover your land with duſt inſtead of rain, and pour down aſhes upon you from heaven, till you are quite deſtroyed. The Lord will deliver you into the hands of your enemies, as you are falling down before them. You ſhall go out againſt them one way and fly from them ſeven ways, and be diſperſed throughout all the kingdoms of the earth. Nay, your carcaſſes ſhall be a prey to the fowls of the air and to the beaſts of the earth, and there ſhall be no body to drive them away. The Lord will ſtrike you with the Ulcer of Egypt, and infect that part of your body through which the dung is voided with the ſcab and itch, ſo that it ſhall be incurable. The Lord will chaſtiſe you with madneſs, blindneſs and folly, and you ſhall grope at noon-day as a blindman is uſed to do in the dark, and you ſhall not be able to find your way. You ſhall always ſuffer calumny and be oppreſſed with violence, and have no body to deliver you. You ſhall marry a wife, and another ſhall defile her. You ſhall build a houſe and not live in it. You ſhall plant a vine, and not gather the fruit of it. Your ox ſhall die before your face, and you not ſo much as taſte of it. Your aſs ſhall be ſtolen away whilſt you look on, and you never get it again. Your ſheep ſhall be given to your enemies, and you have no body to aſſiſt you. Your ſons and your daughters ſhall be delivered to a ſtrange people, and you ſhall ſee theſe things with your own eyes, and they be dried up with ſorrow at the ſight of them all the day long, and you ſhall have no ſtrength in your hands. You ſhall be the proverb and common talk of all the people, amongſt whom the Lord ſhall bring you, Deut. xxviii. 15—38. In fine, after a great many other curſes, and thoſe very dreadful ones, he adds farther: *All theſe curſes ſhall fall upon you, and ſhall purſue and ſeize you until you die, becauſe you have not heard the voice of the Lord your God, nor obſerved his commandments, nor the ceremonies which he commanded you. Becauſe you have not ſerved the Lord your God with joy and cheerfulneſs of heart, for the plenty which you had of all things, you ſhall ſerve your enemy which the Lord will ſend you, with hunger and thirſt, and nakedneſs and all kind of poverty, and he ſhall put an iron yoke upon your neck until he cruſh you to pieces. The Lord will bring a nation againſt you from the fartheſt part of the earth, like an eagle flying with a great deal of force, whoſe language you ſhall not be able to underſtand; an impudent nation, which will ſhew no reſpect to old men, nor take any compaſſion of*

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the ſucking child; which ſhall devour the fruit of your herds, and the fruits of your land, until you periſh. It ſhall leave you no corn, wine nor oil, no herds of oxen, nor flocks of ſheep, until you are ruined and deſtroyed in all your cities, and until your high and ſtrong walls in which you put your truſt, throughout all your land, be raiſed and demoliſhed. You ſhall be beſieged within your gates all over the land which the Lord your God ſhall give you. And you ſhall eat the fruit of your womb, and the fleſh of your ſons and daughters, by reaſon of the deſolation and miſery with which your enemy ſhall oppreſs you, Ibid. ver. 45,——54. Theſe threats and curſes are all taken out of the holy ſcriptures, where you may find many more which I here omit to relate; but whoever reads them with attention, he will meet with ſuch dreadful things as cannot but aſtoniſh him. Then, perhaps, he will open his eyes, and begin to have ſome knowledge of the rigour of God's juſtice and of the malice of ſin, together with the extreme hatred he bears it, as appears by the terrible puniſhments he inflicts on it in this life, by which men may conjecture what a ſinner is to expect in the next. Beſides he will pity the inſenſibility and miſery of the wicked, who are ſo blind as not to ſee the dreadful puniſhments that are reſerved for them.

6. Do not perſuade yourſelf, that theſe threats are only empty words, but conſider that they are rather a prophecy of thoſe misfortunes which have ſince happened to that people; for during the reign of Acham, king of Iſrael, the king of Syria's army having beſieged them in Samaria, we read that men were forced to eat pigeons dung, which was ſold at a great price. Nay, they were reduced at laſt to ſuch extremities, that mothers devoured their own children. 4 Reg. vi. And Joſephus tells us, they were brought to the ſame miſery again in the ſiege of Jeruſalem, Joſ. L. 7. There is ſcarce any body but has heard of the captivity of this people, with the utter ſubverſion of the whole kingdom; for ten tribes of them were carried away into perpetual captivity by the king of Aſſyria, and never returned home again; and the two which remained were quite deſtroyed a great while after by the Roman army, who took many of them priſoners; but the number of thoſe that were ſlain or died during the ſiege was far greater, according to the relation of the ſame hiſtorian.

7. Let no man deceive himſelf by imagining that all theſe calamities concerned none but this people; for they belong to all thoſe in general who, profeſſing to ſerve God, nevertheleſs contemn and violate his law: it is what he himſelf aſſures us of by

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his prophet Amos, saying, *Was it not I that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Palestines out of Cappadocia, and the Syrians out of Cyrene? Behold the eyes of the Lord are over the kingdom which commits sin, for to destroy and blot them out of the face of the earth*, Amos ix. 7, 8. By this he gives us to understand that all these changes of kingdoms and states, as the destroying of some and the establishing of others, are the effects of sin. And if any one doubts whether this concerns us or no, let him search into the histories of past ages, and he will find that God Almighty deals after the same manner with all the wicked, but particularly with those who have known the true law and yet have not observed it. He will there see that a great part of Europe, Africa and Asia, which was formerly full of Christian churches, is now in the hands of Heathens and Barbarians; he will see what calamities the church has suffered from the Goths, the Huns and the Vandals, who, in St. Augustine's time, laid all the countries of Africa waste, sparing neither man, woman nor child, old or young. And at the same time, all the country of Dalmatia and the neighbouring towns were so ruined by these Barbarians, that, as St. Jerom, who was himself of that country, says, "Whosoever passed through it could see nothing but heaven and earth, so universal was the desolation. S. Hier. in c. 1. Sophon. All this serves to inform us that virtue and true devotion not only assist us, in order to obtain the eternal goods, but also to settle us in the possession of the temporal. Wherefore let the consideration of this, and all those other advantages virtue has, serve to make an impression on our hearts, and excite them to the love of that which delivers us from so great evils, and procures us such mighty benefits.

CHAP. XIII.

The twelfth Privilege of Virtue, which is the quiet and happy Death of the Virtuous; and, on the contrary, the deplorable End of the Wicked.

1. ADD to these privileges, the glorious death of good men, to which all the others are directed. For if, as we commonly say, it is the end that crowns the work, what can better deserve a crown, or what can be more glorious than the end of good men, and what more miserable than that of the wicked? *The death of the saints*, says the Psalmist, *is pre-*

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cious in the ſight of the Lord, but the death of ſinners is the worſt, Pſ. cxv. 15. xxxiii. 22, becauſe it is the greateſt of all miſeries, either of the body or ſoul. And therefore St. Bernard, writing upon theſe words, *The death of ſinners is the worſt*, ſays, "That firſt of all it is bad, becauſe it takes them away from the world; worſe yet, becauſe it ſeparates the ſoul from the body; but worſt of all, becauſe of thoſe two eternal torments, fire everlaſting, and the worm that never dies, which immediately follow it." S. Bern. Serm. inter parvos. It cannot but be a great affliction to ſuch perſons to leave the world, a much greater to forſake their own fleſh, but the greateſt of all will be hell torments, which they are to be for ever condemned to. Theſe therefore, and ſeveral other miſeries put together, will diſturb the wicked at this time: becauſe then they will firſt be ſenſible of the ſymptoms and accidents of their diſtemper, the racking pains they endure all over their bodies, the frights and terrors of their ſouls, the anguiſh their preſent condition cauſes their apprehenſions of what muſt follow, the remembrance of what is paſt, the reflection on the accounts they are going to give in, the dread they have of the ſentence to be paſſed againſt them, the horror of the grave, their being ſeparated from all they had an inordinate affection for, that is, from their riches, their friends, their wives, their children, nay, from the very light and common air which they enjoy, and even from life itſelf. The greater love they have had for any of theſe things, the more unwilling will they be to leave it: for, according to the great St. Auguſtine, "what we poſſeſs with love, we can never loſe without grief." De Civit. Dei. Conformable to which was this ſaying of a philoſopher: "The fewer pleaſures a man has enjoyed, the leſs afraid he is of death."

2. But the greateſt torment they ſuffer at this time, is that of an evil conſcience, with the conſideration and dread of thoſe pains which are prepared for them; becauſe man being then alarmed at the approach of death, begins to open his eyes and to conſider what he never thought of in all his life before. Euſebius Emiſſenus gives us a very good reaſon for this in one of his Homilies, where he ſays, "Becauſe at this time man lays aſide all the ſolicitude with which he uſed to ſeek for, and procure all that is neceſſary for life, and does not trouble his head any more, either about working or fighting, or any other employ whatever, it follows from hence that the ſoul being free from every thing elſe, thinks of nothing but the account ſhe muſt make, and all her powers are overcharged with the weight of the divine juſtice and of God Almighty's judgments. Man therefore lying in this miſerable condition, with life behind his

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back and death before his eyes, he eaſily forgets the preſent which he is going to leave, and begins to think of the future, which he is in continual expectation of. There he ſees that his pleaſures and delights are now at an end, and that he has nothing left him but his ſins to appear againſt him, before the tribunal of God." S. Euſeb. Homil. 1. ad Monachos. The ſame doctor diſcourſing again upon this ſubject in another Homily, ſays, "Let us conſider what complaints a negligent ſoul will make at its departure out of this life, what tribulation and anguiſh will ſhe be filled with? what clouds and darkneſs will ſhe lie under, when among thoſe enemies that ſurround her, ſhe ſhall ſee her own conſcience, attended by a multitude of ſins, the forwardeſt to appear againſt her? For ſhe alone, without any other witneſs, will appear before us to convince us by her evidence, and confound us by her knowledge. It will be impoſſible to hide any thing from her, or to deny any thing ſhe ſhall charge us with, ſince there will be no need of going any farther than ourſelves for a witneſs."

3. Peter Damianus handles this matter much better and more at large, Pet. Damian. c. 6. in Inſtitut. Moniol. ad Blancam Comitiſſam. "Let us conſider, ſays he, with attention what dreadful fears and apprehenſions the ſoul of a ſinner will be oppreſſed with, when ſhe is upon the point of leaving the priſon of the fleſh, and how the ſtings of a guilty conſcience will prick and torment her. Then ſhe calls to mind the ſin ſhe has committed, and ſees how ſhe has deſpiſed and broken the commandments of God; then ſhe is troubled to have loſt ſo much time, in which ſhe might have done penance, and with affliction ſees that the account ſhe muſt unavoidably give, and the time of divine vengeance, is juſt at hand. She would willingly ſtay, but is forced to go; ſhe would fain recover what ſhe has loſt, but cannot obtain leave to do it. If ſhe caſts her eyes behind her, and conſiders the whole courſe of her life, it ſeems no more to her than a ſhort moment; if ſhe looks forward, ſhe ſees there the ſpace of an infinite eternity that expects her. She weeps when ſhe conſiders the everlaſting happineſs ſhe has loſt, which ſhe might have gained in the ſhort time of this life; and to be deprived of this unſpeakable ſweetneſs of eternal delight for a fleeting carnal ſatisfaction, is a great affliction to her. She is filled with confuſion to conſider that, for the pleaſing of this miſerable body, which muſt be the food of worms, ſhe has neglected herſelf, who ought to have taken her place amongſt the choirs of angels. When ſhe reflects upon the brightneſs and glory of immortal riches, ſhe is aſhamed to ſee herſelf deprived of them, for having

having ſought after ſuch as were baſe and periſhable. But when ſhe has done looking upward, and caſt her eyes down upon the dark and frightful valley of this world, and at the ſame time ſees the glory of the eternal light above her, ſhe is fully convinced that all ſhe loved in this world was nothing but night and darkneſs. O! if ſhe could but then obtain a little time to do penance in, what auſterities and mortifications would ſhe not undergo? what is it ſhe would not do? what vows would ſhe not make, and what prayers would ſhe not be continually offering up? But whilſt man is revolving theſe things in his mind, behold the meſſengers and forerunners of death are juſt at hand, his eyes become dark and hollow, his breaſt heaves, his voice grows hoarſe, he rattles in the throat, his limbs wax cold, his teeth turn black, he foams at the mouth, and his face grows wan and pale; whilſt theſe things, which ſerve as ſo many preparatives to approaching death, orderly fall out, the miſerable ſoul ſees before her all the works, words and thoughts of her late wicked life, which give in a lamentable teſtimony againſt her, as being the author of them all; and though ſhe would willingly turn her eyes away from them, ſhe cannot, but is forced to ſee them. Let us add to all this, the horrible preſence of the devils on one ſide, and that of virtue and of the bleſſed angels on the other; and we may ſoon gueſs which of the two parties this prey is like to fall to; becauſe, if the dying man carries any works of piety and virtue with him, he is immediately comforted by the invitations and careſſes of the angels; but if the foulneſs of his ſins and of his wicked life paſt require that he ſhould be treated in another manner, immediately he trembles every joint of him, for fear he falls into deſpair; and in this condition is ſnatched, rent, and torn away from his miſerable fleſh, and thrown headlong into everlaſting torments." Thus far Peter Damianus.

4. If all this be true, and muſt happen accordingly, what need any more, if a man has not loſt his ſenſes, to make him ſee how miſerable the condition of the wicked is, and how carefully to be avoided, ſince their end is like to be ſo wretched and deplorable.

5. If the goods of this world could do any ſervice at that time, as they do all the other part of life, their miſery would be much eaſier, but there is none of them that can give the leaſt aſſiſtance. For neither can honours profit a man, nor friends help him; he can have no ſervants to attend him; he muſt expect no favour, becauſe of his quality, no ſuccour from his eſtate, nor any ſervice from any thing whatever, but from virtue

virtue and innocence of life. For, as the wiſe man ſays, *Riches cannot profit us in the day of vengeance, but juſtice alone*, that is, virtue, will deliver from death, Prov. xi. How therefore can the wicked man, finding himſelf ſo poor and deſtitute of all kind of help, forbear trembling to ſee himſelf thus forſaken and neglected at the judgment ſeat of Almighty God?

SECTION I.

Of the Death of the Juſt.

6. But on the contrary, how ſecure are the juſt againſt all theſe miſeries when they come to die? For, as the wicked at this time receive the puniſhment of their ſins, the juſt receive the reward of their deſerts, according to Eccleſiaſticus, who ſays, *He that fears the Lord ſhall be happy in the laſt days, and in the day of his death he ſhall be bleſſed*, Ecclus. i. 19. that is, he ſhall have the rich reward of his labours. St. John in his Revelations, declares the ſame thing to us more expreſsly, when he tells us, *That he heard a voice from heaven which commanded him to write, and the words which it dictated, were theſe: Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt tells them the time is come that they ſhall reſt from their labours, for their works follow them*, Apoc. xiv. 13. How is it poſſible then for a juſt man, that has received ſuch a promiſe as this from Almighty God himſelf, to be frightened at the hour of his death, when he ſees himſelf juſt upon the point of receiving what he has been labouring for all his life-time? For this reaſon, one of holy Job's pretended friends tells him, *That if there be no iniquity nor injuſtice found in him, he ſhall be as bright in the evening as the ſun at noon-day, and when he ſhall imagine himſelf to be quite ſpent, he ſhall ariſe like the morning-ſtar*, Job xi. 14. 17. St. Gregory, writing upon theſe words, ſays, "That the reaſon why this morning brightneſs ſhines upon the juſt in the evening, is becauſe he perceives ſome glimmerings at the hour of his death of that glory which God has prepared for him; and therefore when others are the moſt dejected, he is then moſt cheerful. S. Greg. l. 10. Moral. c. 1. Solomon, in his Proverbs, teſtifies the ſame, when he ſays, *The wicked man ſhall be rejected becauſe of his ſins, but the juſt is in hopes at the hour of his death*, Prov. xiv. 32.

7. To prove this by an example; could any man have better hopes or more courage than the glorious St. Martin had upon his death-bed, who, ſeeing the devil by him, aſked him, "What doſt thou do here, cruel beaſt; thou ſhalt find no mortal

mortal ſin in me to glut thyſelf with, and therefore I ſhall be received into Abraham's boſom in peace." Again, what greater confidence can be than that St. Dominick had, when he was in the ſame circumſtances? for ſeeing the religious brothers all about him, bemoaning themſelves for his departure and the want they ſhould find in the loſs of him, he comforted them with theſe words: "Let nothing trouble or afflict you, my children, for I ſhall do you much more ſervice where I am going than I ſhould be able to do you here." How can a man loſe courage in this combat, or be afraid of death, who looked upon eternal glory to be ſo much his own, as to be in hopes of obtaining it, not only for himſelf, but for his children too?

8. It is upon this account the juſt have ſo little reaſon to be afraid of death, that they praiſe God when they are dying, and thank him for having brought them to their end, looking upon death as aceſſation from their labours, and the beginning of their happineſs and glory. Whereupon St. Auguſtine, on Saint John's Epiſtle, ſays, "It is not to be ſaid of him that dies in peace, but of him that lives in peace, and dies with joy, that he deſires to be diſſolved and be with Chriſt." S. Aug. 9. in Ep. B. Joan. Thus we ſee the juſt man has no reaſon to be troubled at death, but we may with juſtice ſay of him that, like the ſwan, he goes ſinging out of the world, praiſing and glorifying God for calling him to himſelf. He is not afraid of death, becauſe he has feared God and whoſoever has done that, has nothing elſe to be afraid of. He is not afraid of death, becauſe he has been afraid of life; the fear a man has of death being only the effect of a bad life. He is not afraid of death, becauſe he has ſpent all his life in learning how to die, and in preparing himſelf againſt death; and he that ſtands always upon his guard has no need to fear his enemies. He is not afraid of death, becauſe the whole employ of his life has been to ſeek after thoſe that might aſſiſt and ſtand by him at this hour, that is, virtue and good works. He is not afraid of death, becauſe the many ſervices he has done his judge will make him kind and favourable at that time. He is not, in fine, afraid of death, becauſe death is no death, but only a ſlumber to a juſt man; it is no death, it is but a change; it is no death, it is but the laſt day of his toils and labours; it is no death, but only the way that leads to life, and the ſtep by which he muſt mount to immortality; for he knows that when death has paſt through the veins of life, it loſes the bitterneſs it had before, and takes up the ſweetneſs of life.

9. Nor can any other of thoſe accidents which uſually happen at this time terrify him; for, he knows they are nothing

but child-bed pangs, which give him birth to that eternity, the love of which has made him continually long for death, and ſuffer life with patience. He is not frightened with the remembrance of his ſins, becauſe he has Jeſus Chriſt for his Redeemer, whom he has always been acceptable to; nor does the rigour of God's judgments diſhearten him, becauſe his redeemer is his advocate; neither does he ſhrink at the ſight of the devils, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt is his Captain; nor can the horror of the grave make any impreſſion upon him, becauſe he knows, *that he muſt ſow a fleſhy and corruptible body in the earth, that it may afterwards ſpring up incorruptible and ſpiritual*, 1. Cor. xiii. 44. If it be true that the end crowns the work; and if, as Seneca ſays, "we muſt judge of all the reſt by the laſt day, and accordingly paſs ſentence upon the whole life paſt, becauſe all that is paſt is condemned or juſtified by it." Senec. Ep. 12. And if the death of good men be ſo peaceable and quiet, and that of the wicked, on the contrary, ſo diſturbed and painful, what need have we of any other motive, than barely this difference, which is between the death of the one and of the other, make us reſolve againſt a bad life, and to take up with a good one?

10. Where is the benefit of all theſe pleaſures, all this proſperity, and all theſe riches, all the titles and honours in the world, if after all I ſhould be plunged headlong into hell fire? And, on the other ſide, what hurt can all the miſeries of this life do me, if by means of them I can make a happy end, and carry along with me the pledges of eternal glory. Let the wicked man manage his point in the world with as much cunning as he pleaſes, what will he get by all his craft, but juſt to know how to acquire ſuch things as will ſerve to make him more proud, more vain, more ſenſual, more able to ſin, more unable to do good, and to make death ſo much the more bitter and unwelcome, as life was the more pleaſant and delightful? If there is any ſenſe and wit in the world, certainly there can be none greater than to know how to order life well againſt this laſt hour, ſince a wiſe man's chief buſineſs is to underſtand what means are the moſt proper for him to uſe, in order to arrive at his end. If therefore we looked upon him as a ſkilful phyſician, who knows what remedies to preſcribe for the recovery of health, which is the end of this ſcience, we muſt of neceſſity think him truly wiſe who knows how to govern his life, in order to death, that is, in order to the making up of his accounts well, when death, to which he is to direct all his life, ſhall come.

SECTION

SECTION II.

The foregoing Section proved by ſome Examples.

11. For the better explaining and confirming of what I have ſaid, and to give the reader a little ſpiritual recreation, I think fit to add here a few famous examples of the glorious deaths of ſome ſaints, taken out of holy Pope Gregory's fourth book of Dialogues, Greg. L. 4. Dial. c. 13. by which we may plainly perceive how pleaſant and how happy a thing death is to the juſt. If I enlarge a little upon this point, I ſhall not think my time ill ſpent, becauſe the Saint at the ſame time that he relates theſe paſſages, gives a great deal of wholeſome advice and inſtruction.

12. "He tells us, that, during the time the Goths were in Italy, there was a certain lady called Galla, of very conſiderable quality, in Rome, daughter to one Symmachus, a conſul. She was married very young, and became both wife and widow in one year. She had all the invitations imaginable from the world, her youth, and her fortune, to the taking of a ſecond huſband, but ſhe choſe to be the ſpouſe of Chriſt, and to celebrate a marriage with him that begins with ſorrow but ends with joy, rather than with the world, where it begins in joy, but ends in ſorrow, becauſe one of the two muſt unavoidably ſee the death of the other. This lady was of a very hot conſtitution, and therefore the phyſicians told her that if ſhe did not marry again, ſhe would certainly have a beard like a man, which accordingly happened. Yet the holy woman, charmed with the inward beauty of her new bridegroom, was not troubled at her outward deformity, well knowing it would not be offenſive to her heavenly ſpouſe. Therefore, laying aſide her worldly dreſs, ſhe gave herſelf entirely up to the ſervice of God, and entered into a monaſtery, near St. Peter's Church, where ſhe lived for ſeveral years, in great ſimplicity of heart, and in the frequent exerciſe of prayer and charity to the poor. God Almighty being reſolved at length to reward the labours of his ſervant with eternal glory, ſhe was troubled with a cancer in the breaſt, which grew to ſuch a height that ſhe was forced to keep her bed, where, as ſhe lay, ſhe had always two lamps burning by her, being ſo great a lover of light, as to have a horror, not only of ſpiritual, but even of corporal darkneſs. Finding herſelf one night very much out of order, ſhe ſaw the bleſſed Apoſtle St. Peter, ſtanding between the two lamps;

not at all disturbed at the vision, nay, her love on the contrary emboldening and encouraging her, she with a great deal of cheerfulness and joy, asked him :—Great Apostle, are my sins pardoned me yet? To which he answered, with a smiling countenance, and bowing down his head, yes, they are pardoned you, come along with me. But the holy woman having contracted a strict tie of friendship with another religious woman of the same monastery, called Benedicta, replied immediately, I beg that sister Benedicta may go along with me; the Apostle told her she was not to come yet, but that another sister, whom he named should bear her company, and that sister Benedicta should follow her within thirty days. After which he vanished, and the sick lady sending for the prioress, gave her an account of all that had happened, and both she and the other whom St. Peter named died within three days after, and at the end of the thirty days, the other she had asked for. The memory of this passage is still preserved in that monastery, and the younger religious women, who received it from their mothers, recount it with as much fervour and devotion as if they themselves had been eye-witnesses to it." This is St. Gregory's own relation; the reader may observe how glorious an end this was

13. After this, the same Saint gives us an account of another example, no less wonderful, chap. 14. " There was a certain man, says he, at Rome, called Servulus, very poor as to the world, but very rich in merits. His usual station was under a porch before St. Clement's Church, where he begged, being so crippled by the palsy that he could not rise nor sit in his bed, nor so much as lift his hand to his mouth, or turn from one side to the other. His mother and a brother always kept him company and assisted him, and all the alms he could conveniently spare he desired his mother or his brother to distribute among the poor. He could not read, yet he bought some books of the scripture, and when any devout persons came to see him, would desire them to read to him, and by this means he got some insight into holy writ. Besides, he always used to bless God in the midst of his torments, and to employ himself day and night in singing of hymns. But the time drawing nigh when the Lord intended to reward his great patience, the holy man fell extreme sick, and when he perceived he was just going out of the world, he called together all the strangers thereabout, desiring them to join with him in praising God, for the hopes he had given him of his being at the end of his labours.

14. " But

14. "But as he was ſinging amongſt the reſt, he interrupted them on a ſudden, crying out with a loud voice:—Silence, do not you hear the ſongs and hymns of praiſes and thankſgiving which fill the Heavens? And liſtening thus with the ear of his heart to the voices he heard within himſelf, he died. And as ſoon as he had given up the ghoſt, ſuch an extraordinary fragrancy was ſmelt all over the place, that all thoſe preſent were delighted with its ſweetneſs, by which they underſtood that he really heard the ſongs of praiſe and joy with which he was received into Heaven. A religious man of our convent, who is ſtill living, and who was preſent when this happened, often with tears tells me, that thoſe who were there when he died never loſt the ſweet ſmell till his body was buried."

15. I will add another memorable example out of the ſame Saint, whereof he gives a faithful teſtimony, as being himſelf nearly concerned in it, chap. 16. My father, (ſays he), had three ſiſters, who all conſecrated their virginity to God; the eldeſt was called Tarſilla, the ſecond Gordiana, and the youngeſt Emiliana. They all three offered themſelves up to God at the ſame time, with an equal fervour, devotion and reſignation, living together at their own houſe under the obſervance of a very rigorous rule. After they had lived thus for a conſiderable time Tarſilla and Emiliana began to encreaſe every day more and more in the love of their creator, and arrived to ſuch a degree, that though their bodies remained upon earth their ſouls were continually converſant in Heaven. But Gordiana, on the contrary, growing every day more and more cold in her affection for God, was proportionably enflamed with the love of the world. All this while Tarſilla uſed frequently to tell her ſiſter Emiliana, with a great deal of ſorrow, I ſee our ſiſter Gordiana is not well pleaſed with our way of living; I perceive ſhe is wholly bent upon outward things, and that ſhe obſerves not in her heart the vows of her religion. Whereupon the other two ſiſters made it their whole buſineſs to adviſe her, with all the ſweetneſs and tenderneſs they could, to lay aſide her light behaviour, and be modeſt and grave as became her habit. She received this admonition with a very ſerious countenance, but as ſoon as it was over laid aſide that counterfeit gravity. Thus ſhe ſpent her time in idle diſcourſe, delighted in the company of worldly women, nor could ſhe endure to converſe with any other. One night my great-grand-father Felix, who had been pope, appeared to Tarſilla, who had made a much greater progreſs than her ſiſters in continual prayer, corporal auſterities, and faſt, in modeſty, in gravity, and in all kind of piety, and, ſhewing her

her a habitation of eternal brightneſs, ſaid to her, 'Come hither to me, for I am to receive you into this habitation of light.' Within a few days after Tarſilla fell ſick in a burning fever, and was paſt all recovery; and as it is the cuſtom for much company to viſit a perſon of quality that lies a dying, to comfort the kindred of the party that is expiring, ſo at that time ſeveral perſons of note were there, and amongſt the reſt my mother. Then the ſick lady, lifting up her eyes towards Heaven, ſaw her Saviour coming to her; and ſtruck with admiration, began to cry out, Stand aſide, for Jeſus Chriſt is coming.' And having fixed her eyes very ſteadily upon her Saviour, whom ſhe ſaw, ſhe ſoon after breathed out her bleſſed ſoul; and immediately ſuch a fragrancy was ſmelt by all there preſent, as ſufficiently evinced that the author of all ſweetneſs had really been among them. When they uncovered her to waſh her body, as is uſually done with the dead, they found her knees and elbows as hard as a camel's, with continual protraſting at her prayers; ſo that her dead fleſh gave a teſtimony of the employ of her ſpirit during her life. All this happened before Chriſtmas, and as ſoon as Chriſtmas-day was over, Tarſilla appeared to her ſiſter Emiliana in the night time, and ſaid to her, 'Come, my dear ſiſter, and let us keep the feaſt of the Epiphany together, ſince I have kept that of Chriſtmas without you.' But Emiliana being concerned at the danger her ſiſter Gordiana would be expoſed to if ſhe were left alone, anſwered, 'If I go along with you, to whoſe care ſhall I recommend our ſiſter Gordiana?' Tarſilla, with a heavy countenance, replied, 'Do you come with me, as for Gordiana ſhe is reckoned amongſt the people of the world.' Immediately after this viſion, Emiliana fell ſick, and growing every hour worſe and worſe died before the day her ſiſter had named. Gordiana ſeeing herſelf now left alone, became more and more wicked every day, and by degrees, quite loſing the fear of God, and neglecting her modeſty, her devotion, and the vows by which ſhe had conſecrated herſelf to God, went and married a man that had farmed her eſtate of her." This is all taken out of St. Gregory, who, by the examples of thoſe of his own family and blood, ſhews us how happy and proſperous the end of virtue is, and how ſorrowful and mean that of light and inconſtant perſons. I will conclude with one example more upon this ſubject out of the ſame Saint, which happened in his time, and he delivers after this manner:

16. "About the time when I entered into a monaſtery, there was an ancient woman at Rome, called Redempta, who wore

wore a religious habit, and lived juſt by our bleſſed lady's. She had been formerly under the care of a certain holy virgin called Hirundina, who, they ſay, was in great eſteem for her virtue, having led a ſolitary life upon the Preneſtin mountains. This ſame Redempta had two other young virgins that came to her to be her diſciples, the name of one of them was Romula, as for the other, who is ſtill living, I know her by ſight, but cannot tell her name. Theſe three virgins lived a very poor but holy life, all in the ſame houſe. But Romula outſtripped her other companion in all kinds of virtues and graces, as being a woman of wonderful patience, of a moſt perfect obedience, of an extraordinary recollection, a very ſtrict obſerver of ſilence, and very much given to prayer and contemplation. But ſometimes thoſe who appear perfect in the eyes of men, are not without ſome imperfections before God, as we often ſee unſkilful perſons commend a ſtatue, before it is finiſhed as a complete work, and yet the maſter, who knows there is much more to be done to it, does not lay it aſide, becauſe of their extolling it, nor neglect to finiſh it, becauſe of their commendation. Almighty God, dealt after the ſame manner with Romula, whom he thought fit to refine and perfect, by afflicting her ſeverely with the palſy, which obliged her to keep her bed for ſeveral years without any uſe of her limbs. All her pains and ſufferings could never move her to the leaſt impatience, nay, on the contrary, the want of the uſe of her limbs made her increaſe more and more in virtue; ſo that the leſs able ſhe was to do any thing elſe, the more ſhe exerciſed herſelf in her devotions and prayers. At length ſhe called her mother Redempta to her who had brought up theſe two diſciples of hers as if they had been her own children, and ſaid to her, 'Come hither, my dear mother, come hither; Redempta immediately went to her with her other diſciple, according to the relation which they have both of them ſince made to ſeveral perſons, ſo that the thing is now become public, and I myſelf had an account of it at the ſame time it happened. As they were ſitting about midnight, by her bed ſide, there appeared a light from Heaven on a ſudden, which filled the whole chamber. The brightneſs of it was ſo great that they were aſtoniſhed at it. Afterwards they heard a noiſe, as if a great many perſons were coming into the cell, ſo that the door cracked as if it was preſſed by the throng. Then they heard many come in, but, through fear and the extraordinary brightneſs, could ſee nothing, for their hearts were no leſs damped with fear than their eyes were dazzled by the light. After this there followed

a ſweet

a ſweet ſmell, which comforted and refreſhed them as much as the light had frightened them before. They being no longer able to bear with the extraordinary brightneſs of that light, the ſick woman began to comfort her miſtreſs, who ſat there trembling and ſhaking, and ſaid, 'Be not afraid, my dear mother, for I am not dying yet.' And as ſhe often repeated theſe words the light leſſened by degrees, till it was quite gone, but the ſweet ſmell continued ſtill for the ſpace of three days as freſh as when they firſt ſmelled it. The third day being over ſhe called her miſtreſs again, and deſired the viaticum, that is, the bleſſed ſacrament; which, after ſhe had received, Redempta and her other companion were no ſooner gone from her bed-ſide, than they began to hear two choirs of muſicians at the entrance of the door, which, as near as they could judge by their voices, conſiſted of men and women. The men ſung pſalms, and the women anſwered them. And whilſt they were thus performing the rites of this celeſtial funeral, this holy ſoul, leaving the priſon of her body, began her journey heaven-ward, the Divine muſic and fragrancy going away with her, ſo that the higher ſhe mounted the leſs they were perceived here below, till ſuch time as they were both quite loſt." Hitherto are the words of St. Gregory.

17. Many more examples might be brought to this purpoſe, but theſe will ſuffice to ſhew us how quiet, how ſweet, and how eaſy the death of the juſt generally is. For though ſuch evident tokens as theſe are do not always appear, yet in as much as they are all the children of God, and ſince death is the end of all their miſeries and the beginning of that happineſs they expect to be rewarded with, they are always in this extremity ſtrengthened and encouraged by the help of God Almighty's grace, and by the evidence their own good conſciences give in favour of them. Thus the glorious St. Ambroſe comforted himſelf upon his death-bed, ſaying, "I have not lived ſo as to have any reaſon to be ſorry that I was ever born; nor am I afraid to die, becauſe I know I have a favourable maſter." In vita D. Ambroſi. But if any man imagine theſe favours and graces are incredible, let him reflect upon the incomprehenſible immenſity of God's goodneſs, the effect of which is, to love, honour and favour the good, and he will acknowledge, that all I have here aſſerted is but little in compariſon with what the thing itſelf is. For if the infinite goodneſs has ſtooped ſo low as to take our fleſh, and to die upon a croſs for the ſalvation of man; what great matter is it to comfort and honour the good when they are dying, ſince their

their redemption has coſt him ſo dear? And what wonder is it that he ſhould beſtow ſuch graces upon thoſe perſons when they are dying, whom he is to receive into his own houſe, and to make partakers of his glory when they are dead.

SECTION III.

The Concluſion of the ſecond Part.

18. Thoſe we have mentioned are the twelve privileges granted to virtue in this life, and are like the twelve fruits of that moſt beautiful tree St. John, in his Apocalypſe, ſaw planted by a river-ſide, which brought forth twelve fruits every year, according to the number of the months. For, next to the Son of God, what other tree could bear ſuch fruit but virtue, which is the tree that brings forth fruits of holineſs and of life? And what fruits can be more precious than thoſe we have here given you an account of? What more delicious fruit than the fatherly care and providence which God has over thoſe that ſerve him? What more pleaſant than his Divine grace, than the light of wiſdom, the conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, the joy of a good conſcience, the help of a ſecure confidence in him, the true liberty of the ſoul, the inward peace of the heart, the being heard by him in our prayers, the being aſſerted by him in our tribulations, the having of our temporal neceſſities ſupplied, and, in fine, the comfort of a ſweet and quiet death at laſt? Any one of theſe privileges is doubtleſs ſo great in itſelf, that, were a man but thoroughly acquainted with it, he would need no other motive to embrace virtue and make a change of life. This alone would ſufficiently convince him of the truth of that ſaying of our Saviour, *That whoſoever ſhould leave the world for the love of him, ſhould receive even in this life a hundred fold, and hereafter life everlaſting*, Mark x. 29. as has been ſhewn above.

19. Conſider what good this is we invite you to. Think whether you would have any cauſe to repent, ſhould you quit all the things of this world for it. The only reaſon why it is not valued by the wicked is, becauſe they know not its value. Therefore the Saviour of the world ſaid, *That the kingdom of Heaven was like a hidden treaſure*, Matth. xiii. 44. for it is a real treaſure, but hid from others, not from the owner. The Prophet underſtood the value of this treaſure, when he ſaid, *My ſecret is for myſelf, my ſecret is for myſelf*, Iſa. xxiv. He did not much care whether others knew of his happineſs. For this is not like other goods, which are not goods unleſs they

they are known; becauſe being in themſelves no longer goods than whilſt the opinion of the world makes them ſuch, it is requiſite the world ſhould know them, or elſe they will never have ſo much as the name of goods. But this good, on the contrary, makes him good and happy that poſſeſſes it; and though none but himſelf knows of it, yet he has as much true comfort and ſatisfaction with it, as if all the world knew it.

20. But neither my tongue, nor all that has hitherto been ſaid, is ſufficient to unfold this ſecret; becauſe all that the tongue of man is able to expreſs falls far ſhort of what it truly is. The only key therefore to explain it, is the Divine light, and the long experience and uſe of virtue. Beg this light of our Lord, and you will ſoon find this treaſure and God himſelf, in whom you will find all things; and you will ſee with how much reaſon the Prophet ſaid, *Bleſſed is the people that have God for their Lord*, Pſ. cxliii. for what can he want that is in poſſeſſion of this good? We read in the firſt book of Kings, that Helcanah, Samuel's father, ſeeing his wife Anne troubled, becauſe ſhe had no children, ſaid to her, *Anne, what makes you weep? why is your heart troubled? am not I worth more to you than ten children?* 1 Reg. i. Now if a loving huſband, who to-day is, and to-morrow is not, be worth more to his wife than ten children, how much more muſt God be worth do you think to the ſoul that truly poſſeſſes him? Blind and ſenſeleſs men, what is it you do? what is it you are about? what is it you ſeek after? why do you leave the fountain of paradiſe for the muddy lakes of this world? why do you not take the advice of the Prophet along with you, when he ſays, *Taſte and ſee how ſweet the Lord is?* Pſ. xxxiii. 8. Why will you not once at leaſt try this food? why will you not taſte of this meat? Do but believe what God has ſaid, do but once begin, and you will find yourſelves undeceived of all your errors as ſoon as ever you enter into this path, as ſoon as ever you take this buſineſs in hand. The ſerpent Moſes's rod was turned into, looked frightful at a diſtance; but as ſoon as he touched it with his hand, it became a harmleſs rod again, Exod. vii. It was not without reaſon that Solomon ſaid, *It is dear, it is dear, ſays the buyer; but when he has got the goods into his own hands, he is glad of the bargain*, Prov. xx. This happens every day to men in this ſort of purchaſe, for they, through their want of ſkill in ſpiritual affairs, are at firſt ignorant of the value of this commodity, and therefore think it is ſet at too great a price, becauſe they are carnal. But when once they have taſted how ſweet the Lord is, they are immediately

diately pleaſed with their purchaſe, and confeſs a man can never give too much for ſo great a treaſure. How glad was the man in the goſpel, that he ſold all his eſtate to purchaſe that piece of ground in which he found a treaſure? Matth. xiii. 24. Can the Chriſtian then, who has heard of the name of this good, not ſo much as try what it is? It is ſtrange that if a merry companion ſhould affirm to you, that a great treaſure was hid in ſome part of your houſe, you would not fail to dig there to diſcover the truth, and yet, when you are aſſured by the infallible word of Almighty God himſelf, that you may find an ineſtimable treaſure within your own breaſt, you have not the courage, or will not take the pains to look for it. O that you did but know how much truer this news is, and how much greater this treaſure! O that you did but know with how little trouble you might find it! O that you did but ſee, *how near the Lord is to thoſe that call upon him, if they call upon him in truth!* Pſ. cxliv. 19. How many men have there been in the world, who, by a true ſorrow for their ſins and a begging pardon for them, have in leſs than a week's time diſcovered land, or rather have found out a new heaven and a new earth, and have begun to perceive the kingdom of God within themſelves? And what wonder is it that the Lord, who has ſaid, *In whatſoever hour the ſinner ſhall be ſorry for his ſin, I will remember it no longer*, Luk. xv. ſhould work ſuch an effect as this is? What wonder is it to ſee him do this, who ſcarce gave the Prodigal Son leave to make an end of the ſhort prayer he had ſtudied, before he fell about his neck, embraced, and received him with ſo much joy and welcome? Return therefore to this tender father; riſe a little in the morning, and continue for ſome days to beg and cry at the gates of his mercy, and aſſure yourſelf that if you perſevere with humility, he will anſwer you at laſt, and diſcover the hidden treaſure of his love to you; and after having had ſome proof of it, you will immediately cry out, with the Spouſe in the Canticles, *If a man ſhould give all that he is worth for love alone, he would think what he has given as worth nothing*, Cant. viii.

THE

THE SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

PART THE THIRD.

Wherein are anſwered all thoſe EXCUSES Men generally make for not following VIRTUE.

CHAP. I.

Againſt the firſt Excuſe of thoſe who defer changing their Lives, and advancing in Virtue, till another Time.

1. THERE is no doubt but that what we have hitherto ſaid ſhould be more than enough for the obtaining of that chief end we have propoſed to ourſelves, which is to excite men to a ſincere love of virtue, God Almighty's aſſiſting grace co-operating: but tho' all this be true, yet the malice of man is not without its excuſes and apparent reaſons, either to defend or comfort itſelf when it does amiſs. As Eccleſiaſticus affirms in theſe words: *The ſinner will avoid correction, and will find out ſome excuſe, according to his own will*, Eccl. xxxii. 21. And Solomon ſays, to the ſame purpoſe, *That he who has a mind to forſake his friend, is ſeeking out for occaſions to do it*, Prov. xviii. 1. ſo the wicked that deſire to ſeparate themſelves from God have always ſome excuſe or other ready. For ſome there are we ſee, that put off this buſineſs of their ſalvation to another time; others again defer it till their death; others ſay, they are afraid of ſetting upon an undertaking ſo hard and laborious; ſome again there are that comfort themſelves up with

with the hope of God's mercy, whilſt they perſuade themſelves, that without charity they may be ſaved by faith and hope; and others, in fine, enamoured with this world, cannot quit the happineſs they have in it, tho' for the obtaining of that which God has promiſed them. Theſe are the moſt frequent deceits and amuſements the enemy of mankind makes uſe of to infatuate men, that he may keep them all their lifetime under the ſlavery of ſin, that death may ſurpriſe them in that miſerable ſtate. We ſhall now expoſe thoſe frauds in this laſt part of the book, and firſt anſwer thoſe who put off this grand concern till another time, which is the moſt frequent practice of this ſort.

2. Some therefore there are who own all that has been ſaid to be true, and that there is no way ſo ſecure as that of virtue, which they deſign to follow, though they cannot do it at preſent, but they ſhall have time enough hereafter to do it better, and with more eaſe. St. Auguſtine tells us, it was thus he anſwered God before his converſion: "Stay but a little longer, O Lord; juſt now, juſt now, I will leave the world," St. Aug. L. 8. Conf. c. 5. Thus the wicked deal continually with God, firſt appointing one day and then another, ſtill ſhifting the time of their converſion.

3. It will be no hard matter to prove that this is a manifeſt artifice of the old ſerpent, who has been very well uſed to lying and deceiving of men; and this once made out and granted, all the controverſy ceaſes. For we are already convinced there is nothing in this world which every Chriſtian ought to deſire more than his ſalvation, and that for the obtaining of it, a ſincere converſion and a perfect amendment of life is abſolutely neceſſary; for without theſe there is no ſalvation to be expected. What we have therefore to do is, to ſee when this converſion ought to be. All the buſineſs at preſent is the appointing of this time, as to the reſt, it is what every body agrees upon. You ſay you will begin your converſion very ſhortly; I ſay, you are to begin it at this very moment. You ſay, it will be eaſier for you to do it hereafter; I ſay, it will be eaſier to do it now. Let us ſee whether of the two is in the right.

4. But before we ſpeak of the eaſineſs of a converſion, I deſire you will tell me, who it is that has given you ſecurity for an after converſion? How many do you think have been deceived by this hope? St. Gregory tells us, "That God, who has promiſed to pardon a ſinner, if he does penance, has not promiſed that he ſhall live till to-morrow." Homil. 12. in Evang.

Evang. St. Cæsarius has something to the same purpose: "Some body will perhaps say, when I come to be old, then I will make use of the physic of penance. How can human weakness have the impudence to presume so far of itself, when it has not so much as the promise of one day?" St. Cæsar. Homil. 13. Tom. 2. Biblioth. Patr. As for my part, I cannot but think that the number of those souls that have been lost by this means is infinite. It was thus the rich man in the gospel was damned for ever. St. Luke says of him, that, seeing he had as good a crop one year as he could have desired, he began to consider with himself, and to say, *What shall I do, because I want room to lay up my corn? This I will do: I will pull my barns down, and make them larger, that I may there heap up all that this year has yielded me, and all my goods; and I will say to my soul, thou hast a great many goods laid up for several years. Live at your ease, eat, drink and be merry,* Luk. xii. 17, 18, 19, 20. But as this unfortunate wretch was computing what he was worth, he heard a voice, which said to him, *Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those goods be which thou hast provided?* What greater folly then can there be than for a man to dispose of *hereafter*, with as much authority as if he had time itself in his own hands, whereas there is none but God that can dispose of it? St. John says of the Son of God, *he had the keys of death and life* for to open and to shut them when and upon whom he thought fit; with what face then can a vile worm dare to usurp such a power? This insolence alone deserves, for its punishment, never to have an opportunity of doing penance for the future, that so the fool may pay for his folly, in not making his advantage of the time God gave him.

5. And since the number of persons that meet with this kind of punishment is so great, it will be but prudent to learn to be wise at other men's expences, and to let their misfortunes teach us how to secure ourselves, pursuant to this wholesome advice of Ecclesiasticus: *My son, defer not thy conversion to God, and do not put it off from day to day. For his wrath will come on a sudden, and will destroy thee in the day of his vengeance,* Ecclus. v. 8, 9.

SECTION I.

6. But, after all, put the case that you shall live as long as you imagine; whether do you think it will be easier, to begin from this very moment to amend your life, or to defer it till another

another time? For the clearer underſtanding of this point we will ſum up, in ſhort, the chief reaſons which make a preſent converſion ſeem ſo difficult. This difficulty does not proceed from thoſe obſtacles which men fancy, but from the bad habit of their wicked lives paſt, which they had rather die than change. For this reaſon St. Jerom ſaid, "That which makes the way of virtue ſo hard and narrow, is the long cuſtom of ſinning, becauſe cuſtom, being a ſecond nature, there is no overcoming it, without overcoming nature herſelf, which is the greateſt victory a man can poſſibly gain." Epiſt. 14. ad Celentian. And therefore St. Bernard tells us, "That when once any vice is well rooted by a cuſtom of many years ſtanding, there is no overcoming of it without a very extraordinary, nay, even miraculous, aſſiſtance of God Almighty's grace." St. Bern. c. 47. de modo bene vivendi. So that a Chriſtian ought, upon this conſideration, to be afraid of nothing more than of a bad habit in any vice; becauſe vices, in ſome manner, claim preſcription, as well as the affairs of the world, and when once they have got ſo far as this, you will find it no eaſy matter to overcome them, unleſs, as St. Bernard ſays, "God aſſiſt you by his particular grace."

7. Another cauſe of this difficulty is, the power of the devil, who has an abſolute command over a ſoul in ſin. He is the ſtrong man in arms the goſpel ſpeaks of, that keeps all he has in his power with ſuch care and ſecurity. Luc. 15. This difficulty alſo proceeds from God Almighty's withdrawing himſelf from the ſoul polluted with ſin. For though he ſtands centinel upon the walls of Jeruſalem, yet he retires ſtill farther from a ſoul in ſin, as the number of its ſins increaſes. And what miſeries and afflictions a ſoul is oppreſſed with, on account of this ſeparation, we may learn from God himſelf, who has declared it by the mouth of one of his Prophets: *Wo be to them, becauſe they have departed from me.* Oſea vii. 13. And in another chapter he ſays, *Wo be to them, whenſoever I ſhall depart from them*, ch. ix. 12. which is the ſecond *wo* St. John ſpeaks of in his Apocalypſe, ch. xi.

8. The laſt cauſe of this difficulty is, the corruption of the faculties of our ſoul, which are very much impaired by ſin, not indeed in themſelves, but in their operations and effects. For, as vinegar corrupts and ſours wine, as worms rot the fruit, and, as in fine, one contrary ſpoils another, juſt ſo is ſin the greateſt enemy the ſoul has, and the things which is moſt directly oppoſite to her ſpoils and ruins all her powers and faculties; for ſin darkens the underſtanding, weakens the will,

will, diſorders the appetite, and makes the free-will more infirm and leſs able to govern itſelf, and the operations that belong to it, though it can never entirely loſe either its being or its liberty. Now theſe faculties of the ſoul, being the inſtruments our ſoul makes uſe of for the doing of any good, and the wheels of the clock, which is a virtuous and regular life, if theſe wheels and inſtruments are out of order, what can be expected from them but diſorder and trouble? Theſe therefore are the chief cauſes of this difficulty, and they all of them originally ſpring from ſin, and increaſe in proportion to the crimes we commit.

9. The caſe being thus, how can you poſſibly imagine that your converſion and the reformation of your life will be eaſier to you, when the continual increaſe of your ſins ſhall have increaſed the occaſion of theſe difficulties? It is certain the greater the number of your ſins ſhall be, the leſs you will be diſpoſed to leave them: nay, your deferring will but give the devil a greater power over you, and oblige God to withdraw himſelf ſo much the farther from you. Hereafter your ſoul will be more depraved of all its powers and faculties. Now, if this difficulty ariſe from theſe cauſes, what man of ſound judgment will ever fancy, that when the cauſes of it increaſe on all ſides, it will be leſs troubleſome to remove them than when they were fewer?

10. For it is evident, that if you continue every day to commit new ſins, you will in time add other knots to thoſe you were tied down by before; you will increaſe the chains that bound you, by adding other new ones to them, and make the weight you groaned under before much more heavy; hereafter the habit of ſin will blind the underſtanding, make the will leſs able to do any thing that is good, ſtrengthen the appetite in its deſire of evil, and render the free-will more weak in defending itſelf. Since therefore things ſtand thus, how can you perſuade yourſelf you ſhall find leſs trouble in this buſineſs hereafter? If you ſay, you cannot paſs over this ford till it grows deeper, how will you be able to get over when it has once ſwelled up into a rapid ſtream? If you find it ſo hard a matter to pluck up the plants of your vices when they are but newly ſet, how much more troubleſome will it be to remove them when they ſhall have taken very deep root? that is, if now, whilſt your vices have but little force, you ſay you cannot overcome them, how ſhall you be able to get the better of them when they are more fixed and ſtrengthened? You have now perhaps an hundred vices to fight with, and

ſome

ſome time hence you may have a thouſand; now perhaps you reſiſt bad habits of a year or two ſtanding, hereafter perhaps they will be of ten. Who tells you, that you may with more eaſe carry your burden hereafter, when you have added a great deal more weight to it, ſince you are not able to carry it without ſtooping now? How can you be ſo blind as not to ſee that all theſe are the artifices and deceits of a bad pay-maſter, who puts you off from time to time, becauſe he has no mind to diſcharge the debt? How can you chuſe but ſee, that theſe are the impoſture of the old ſerpent, who by his lies ſeduced our firſt parent, and is continually endeavouring to put the ſame trick upon us?

11. If this be true, how can you imagine that theſe difficulties which ſeem impoſſible for you to break through now, ſhould become much eaſier when their ſtrength and number is increaſed? How can a man think, that the more his crimes are, the eaſier it will be for him to get his pardon; or that the cure will be the eaſier, when the diſeaſe is grown more deſperate? Have you never read in Eccleſiaſticus, *that an old diſeaſe puzzles the phyſician, whereas that which is taken in the beginning is ſoon cured?* Eccl. x. 11, 12. This kind of cheat was diſcovered by an angel to one of the holy fathers of the deſert, as we read in their lives; for, taking him by the hand, he led him into a field, and there ſhewed him a man that was making faggots; after he had made up a great bundle, he endeavoured to carry it away upon his ſhoulders, and finding it too heavy for him, he fell to cutting again, to make his bundle ſtill bigger; but perceiving himſelf leſs able to carry it now than he was before, he went on nevertheleſs a third time to increaſe his former bundle, imagining that adding of more to it was the way to make it lighter. The holy man wondering at what he ſaw, the angel told him that thoſe men were guilty of no leſs folly, who, finding themſelves unable to bear up under the weight of their ſins, which preſs ſo heavily upon them, yet increaſe their load every day, by heaping ſin upon ſin, ſuppoſing they ſhall be better able to carry the load hereafter, when it ſhall be much bigger, though they cannot carry it now.

12. Amongſt all theſe things, which are ſuch hindrances to our converſion, what ſhall I ſay of the force of ill cuſtom in particular, and of the power it has to keep us in our ſins? For it is certain that as a man, when he is knocking in a nail, drives it the farther every ſtroke he gives, and that the deeper it goes, the harder it is to be plucked out again; in the ſame

manner every bad action we do is like a freſh ſtroke with a hammer, that drives our vices deeper into our ſouls, and by degrees fixes them ſo faſt there, that it is as much as a man can do to get them out again. This is the reaſon why ſo many perſons, who ſpent their youth in debauchery and vice, are frequently ſubject to the ſame ſins even in their old age, though their years and the weakneſs of nature itſelf have caſt them off. So that when nature is quite tired and worn out with ſin, cuſtom ſtill runs on in the ſame track, and makes this ſort of men ſeek after thoſe pleaſures which they are out of all poſſibility of enjoying; ſo tyrannical and arbitrary is the power which evil cuſtom alone exerciſes over thoſe that are carried away by it. For this reaſon, we read in the book of Job, *That the bones of a wicked man ſhall be filled with the ſins of his youth, and that they ſhall ſleep with him in the duſt.* Job xx. 11. By this we may ſee that ſuch kinds of vices as theſe have no other end but death, the common end of all things; nor do they end here, but continue for all eternity; and therefore it is ſaid, they *ſleep with him in the duſt.* For an old cuſtom, which is changed into nature, imprints the very inclinations to vice ſo deep in the bones and marrow, that, like a ſlow fever in a phthiſical man, it ſets the very bowels into a flame, and makes him quite deſpair of any eaſe or comfort. This is what our Saviour himſelf has taught us, by his raiſing of Lazarus to life again, after he had been dead four days: it was with cries and a great many tears that he raiſed him, notwithſtanding he had with ſo much eaſe reſtored ſeveral dead to life before. This was to give us to underſtand, what a miraculous work it was for God to raiſe a man to life, that had been four days dead and almoſt corrupted; that is, who has been a long time accuſtomed to ſin, and habituated in it. For, according to St. Auguſtine's expoſition, the firſt of theſe four days is the pleaſure of the ſin, the ſecond is the conſent given to it, the committing of it the third, and the fourth is the cuſtom of ſinning; and he that is once arrived to this degree, is the Lazarus that has been four days dead, that cannot be reſtored to life again but by our Saviour's ſighs and tears.

13. This plainly demonſtrates how difficult that man makes his converſion, who always puts it off from time to time, and how the longer he defers the more uneaſy he makes it. It is therefore a folly and deceit in thoſe men who ſay, it will be much eaſier for them to amend their lives hereafter, than it is at preſent.

SECTION

SECTION II.

14. But let us put the caſe now, that all falls out as you imagine, and that your hopes meet with no diſappointment; yet what will you ſay to all the time you loſe before your converſion, in which you might merit ſuch mighty treaſures? What folly would it be, to ſpeak according to the world, for a man, when a town were taken by a ſtorm, and all the reſt of the ſoldiers plundering up and down and loading themſelves with wealth, to be playing in the market among the children: your folly is much greater, for whilſt the juſt are buſying themſelves on good works, that they may by virtue of them purchaſe the kingdom of Heaven, you loſe this opportunity, and ſpend your time in mere follies and trifles of the world.

15. And what will you ſay, not only to thoſe goods you loſe, but to the evils you commit in the mean time? Is it not certain, as St. Auguſtine ſays, "That a man ought not, for the whole world, to commit one venial ſin?" Lib. 4. Samendaciud. c. 1. How can you then conſent ſo eaſily to commit ſo many mortal during all this time, when you ought not to commit any ſin whatſoever, though it were for the ſalvation of a thouſand worlds. How can you dare to ſin againſt and to provoke him to wrath, at whoſe gates you muſt knock, at whoſe feet you are to fall, from whoſe hands you are to expect your eternal lot, whoſe mercy you pretend to obtain at laſt by your ſighs and tears? How can you dare, with ſo much treachery, to offend him whom you will one day ſtand ſo much in need of, and whom you muſt expect to find ſo much the leſs favourable to you, as you ſhall have offended him the more? Againſt ſuch perſons as theſe St. Bernard reaſons excellently well, when he ſays: "Tell me now, you who reckon ſo falſely, continuing ſtill in your evil courſes, whether you think that God will pardon you your ſins or not? If you imagine he will not, what greater folly than to ſin on without hopes of pardon? And if you perſuade yourſelf he is ſo good and merciful as to pardon you, notwithſtanding you have ſo frequently offended him, tell me what greater ingratitude and malice can there be, than to make that the occaſion of offending which ought to excite you the more ſtrongly to love him?" How can a man anſwer this argument?

What will you ſay of the tears, the ſins you now commit, will coſt you hereafter? For if God ſhould call and viſit you hereafter, (and your condition will be very miſerable if he

does not) be assured that every mouthful you eat now will be more bitter to you than gall, that every sin you have committed will cost you continual tears, and that you will, one day, wish you had suffered a thousand deaths rather than have offended so good a God. The time king David spent in unlawful pleasures was but very short, and yet his grief and sorrow for it was such, that he himself tells us, *Every night I will wash my bed and water my couch with my tears.* Ps. vi. 7. His tears flowed from him with such excess that St. Jerom's translation, instead of saying, *I will wash my bed*, renders it, "I will make my bed swim in my tears;" to give us a lively representation of those streams that flowed from his eyes, because they had not observed the law of God. Why then will you spend your time in sowing such seed as can never bring you any other fruit but tears?

16. You ought farther to consider, that you do not only sow tears for the future, but raise difficulties to obstruct a good life, through the settled habit of living ill. For as a lingering distemper is scarce ever so perfectly cured, but that it leaves some of its ill symptoms behind, even so does the habit of sin, which is of a long continuance, weaken a man on that side, and expose him the more to the attacks of his mortal enemy. Moses made the children of Israel drink the very ashes of the calf they had adored, in punishment of their crime. Exod. xxxii. 20. The ordinary punishment God Almighty inflicts for some kinds of sins is, to permit them, by a just judgment, to remain in our very bones, as if we had drank them up, and to let those become our executioners which were the idols we adored before.

17. Add to all this, the bad choice and distribution you make in setting apart old age to do penance, and suffering the prime and flower of your years to slip away, without making any advantage of it. What a folly would it be for a man who has many beasts of burden, and several loads to put on them, to lay all upon the weakest beast, and to let the rest go light? Such is the folly of those who leave the whole burden of penance for old age to carry, and let their youth and vigorous days pass away without laying any weight upon them; whereas youth is fitter to bear this load than old age is, which is scarce able to support itself. It was a good saying of the great philosopher Seneca, "That whosoever defers his being virtuous till he comes to be old, does as good as tell us, he will spend no other time upon virtue but that which is fit for nothing else." Sen. Lib. de Crevitate vitæ, c. 15. Consider farther, how

great

great that ſatisfaction is which the Divine Majeſty requires for thoſe offences committed againſt it. This ſatisfaction is ſo great, as St. John Climachus tells us, "That man can ſcarce ſatisfy to-day for the ſins of to-day, and ſo balance his daily account." Why then will you be all your lifetime increaſing your debts, and refer the payment of them to old age, which will have enough to do to wipe off its own ſcores. This crime is ſo heinous, that St. Gregory looks upon it as a ſort of treaſon "That man (ſays he) comes very ſhort of the allegiance he owes to God, who expects old age to do penance in. Nay, he has a great deal of reaſon to fear his falling into the hands of juſtice, for having preſumed ſo raſhly upon mercy." Grad. 5.

SECTION III.

18. But let us put the caſe now, that nothing of what we have ſaid happen; yet if there be any honeſty, any reaſon or juſtice in the world, is not the greatneſs of the benefits you have received, and of the glory you have a promiſe of, a ſufficient motive to make you leſs ſparing of the time you ſpend in the ſervice of him who has been ſo liberal in rewarding you? It was with a great deal of reaſon Eccleſiaſticus ſaid: *Let nothing hinder you from praying at all times, and be not afraid of doing juſtice even unto death, becauſe the reward which God gives remains for ever.* Eccl. xviii. 22. If therefore the continuance of the reward be ſo long, why ſhould you deſire your ſervice to end ſo ſoon? If the reward is to remain as long as God ſhall reign in Heaven, why ſhould not your ſervice continue as long as you live upon the earth? Your whole life at the beſt is but one ſmall point, and yet you will cut off the two-thirds of it, and leave God no more than a mere puff or breath.

19. Beſides all this, if you have any hopes of your ſalvation, you are to ſuppoſe that God has predeſtinated you from all eternity for this ſalvation. If then God has been ſo forward as to love you from all eternity, to make you a Chriſtian, to adopt you for one of his children, and to make you an heir of his kingdom, how can you neglect to love him till the end of your days, who has loved you from his eternity, which has no beginning? How can you reſolve to do him ſo little ſervice, who has reſolved to confer ſo many favours on you? It is but reaſonable that, ſince the reward is to laſt for ever, the ſervice ſhould do ſo to, if it be poſſible. But ſince it can laſt no longer than life, why will you, out of ſo ſhort a ſpace, take ſo much time which ſhould have been ſpent in God's ſervice, leaving him

him ſo little, and that the worſt part of it. For, as Seneca ſays, "The little that is left at the bottom of a veſſel is nothing but dregs." Thus you ſee how ſmall a ſhare you have for God: *Curſed be the deceitful man*, ſays God by his prophet Malachy, *who has a male in his flock, and yet ſacrifices an infirm creature to me; becauſe I am a great king ſays the Lord of hoſts, and my name is terrible amongſt the nations.* Mal. i. 14. As if he had ſaid more plainly, there are none but great ſervices due to ſo great a Lord as I am, and it is an affront to ſuch a majeſty to offer it the refuſe of any thing. Why therefore do you reſerve the better and the more beautiful part of your life for the ſervice of the devil, and are willing to give God no other but what the world will not accept of? God has ſaid, *There ſhall not be in your houſe a greater meaſure and a leſs, but your weight ſhall be true and juſt.* Deut. xxv. 14, 15. And yet in contradiction to this law you will keep two unequal meaſures, a great one for the devil, whom you treat as your friend, and another very little one for God, whom you deal with as an enemy.

20. Above all this, I earneſtly deſire that, if theſe benefits cannot move, you would at leaſt reflect upon the ineſtimable favour the eternal Father has conferred upon you, in giving you his only begotten Son to redeem your ſoul, by laying down that life which was worth infinitely more than all the lives of men and angels together; ſo that, had you all thoſe lives in yourſelf, and an infinite number more, you ought to give them all to him that has given you his life, and yet all this would be too ſmall a return for it. Upon what account, with what face, and by what privilege, can you refuſe him who has laid down ſo precious a life for you, ſuch a poor and miſerable one as yours is? What is worſe, you take away the beſt and moſt noble part of it, and leave him nothing but the lees and dregs.

21. We will conclude this chapter as Solomon ends his Eccleſiaſtes, where he exhorts man to be mindful of his Creator in his youth, and not to put off a buſineſs of ſuch concern till old age comes on, which is unfit for any kind of corporal labours; and whoſe infirmities and inabilities he deſcribes under obſcure and wonderful parables. *Remember*, ſays he, *thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction comes and the years approach, of which thou mayeſt ſay, they do not pleaſe me: before the ſun and light, with the moon and ſtars, grow dark, when the guards of the houſe*, that is to ſay, the hands, *ſhall tremble; when the ſtouteſt perſons ſhall quake*, that is to ſay, the legs which bore all the weight of this building;

when

when there ſhall be but few teeth left, and thoſe quite uſeleſs; and when thoſe faculties which ſee through the windows of the eyes ſhall grow dark; when they ſhall ſhut the gates in the ſtreet, becauſe the organs and inſtruments of all the other ſenſes will fail too; *and when a man ſhall awake at the crowing of the cock,* by reaſon of the little ſleep men generally take when they are at this age; *when all the daughters of muſic ſhall become deaf,* becauſe all the veſſels which form the voice ſhrink up and grow narrower; *when there is no ſtrength left for to go upright, nor to walk in a rugged or ſlippery way;* when, on the contrary, *a man is apt to ſtumble upon ſmooth and even ground; when the almond tree ſhall be bloſſomed,* that is, when the head ſhall be covered with grey hairs; *when there ſhall be no body left to carry the burden, be it ever ſo light and eaſy; when man ſhall be deprived of all things,* becauſe the faculties of the ſoul, where the ſeat of the appetites is, grow weaker and weaker every day; *for man ſhall go to the houſe of his eternity,* which is the grave, *and his friends ſhall go up and down in the ſtreets to bewail him; when,* in fine, *the duſt ſhall return to its earth from whence it came, and the ſpirit ſhall go towards God that gave it.* Eccl. xii. 8. Thus far Solomon.

22. Follow therefore this advice: remember your Creator whilſt you are yet young, and do not put off doing penance to thoſe heavy years when nature itſelf fails, and the vigour of all the ſenſes weakens and decays, and man is fitter to ſupply the defects of nature, by making much of himſelf, than to embrace the toils and hardſhips of penance, when virtue ſeems rather a neceſſity than a choice, and when vices gain a reputation by us, becauſe they quit us ſooner than we quit them; though for the moſt part we are the ſame when we grow old as we were when young, according to the ſaying of Eccleſiaſticus: *How ſhall you find in your old age what you never laid up in your youth?* Eccl. xxv. 5.

23. This is the wholeſome advice we have from Solomon; and Eccleſiaſticus gives us the ſame, when he ſays, *You ſhall confeſs and praiſe God whilſt you are alive; whilſt you are alive and in good health you ſhall praiſe God, and you ſhall be glorified in his mercies,* Eccl. xvii. 27. It is a very myſterious thing that of all the ſick that were near the pool, he who firſt went in after the motion of the waters found a moſt certain cure, John. v. 4. to give us to underſtand, that all our ſalvation depends on our ready compliance with and ſubmiſſion to God Almighty's inward motions. Run therefore, and make all the haſte you can; *and if,* as the Prophet ſays, *you ſhould*

hear

hear the voice of God to-day, Pſ. xciv. 8. do not put off your anſwer till to-morrow, but begin from this very moment the work of your ſalvation, which you will find ſo much the eaſier to finiſh, as you ſhall begin the ſooner.

CHAP. II.

Againſt thoſe Perſons who defer their Penance to the Hour of Death.

1. THERE is another ſort of men who put off their penance to the hour of their death; but what we have ſaid, in the foregoing chapter, might ſerve to make them aſhamed of their folly. For if it be ſo dangerous to defer it but for a ſhort time, what muſt be the conſequence of deferring it till the very moment that man is going to leave the world? This being ſo univerſal an error, and many ſouls being loſt by it, it is neceſſary we ſhould treat of it in a more particular manner. And though it is to be feared, that the handling of this ſubject may be an occaſion to ſome weak perſons of deſpair and diſcouragement, yet the conſequence is much worſe if men ſhould remain ignorant of the danger they expoſe themſelves to, by deferring their converſion to the hour of their death: ſo that if we weigh theſe two dangers together, we ſhall find the latter far the greater, becauſe there are many more ſouls which periſh through an indiſcreet confidence than an immoderate fear. It is therefore requiſite that we, who are placed on Ezechiel's watch-tower, ſhould forewarn them of theſe dangers, that ſo they who will follow our advice may not be drawn headlong into this error, and that they who are reſolved to deſtroy themſelves may not lay their blood at our doors. But becauſe all the light and truth we are capable of in this life can be no other than that we receive from the ſcripture, the holy fathers and doctors, let us ſee what they ſay upon this point, for I do not think that any man will be ſo raſh as to preſer his opinion before theirs. To proceed then in this method, we will firſt deliver what the ſaints of ancient times, and then what the ſcripture teaches upon this ſubject.

SECTION

SECTION I.

The Opinions of the ancient Fathers concerning Death-bed Repentance.

2. Before we enter into this diſpute we muſt preſuppoſe, what St. Auguſtine and all other doctors ſay, that as true penance is the work of God, ſo it is in his power to inſpire it whenever he pleaſes; and therefore whenſoever we are touched with a true ſorrow for our ſins, it has force and power enough for the working out of ſalvation, though we were lying upon our death-beds. But to let you ſee how rarely we have any examples hereof, there is no need of believing either yourſelf or me; do but believe the ſaints, for it is by their mouths that the Holy Ghoſt has ſpoken, and it is highly reaſonable we ſhould give credit to their words and teſtimony. In the firſt place then hear what St. Auguſtine ſays to this purpoſe, in his Book of True and Falſe Penance. "Let nobody defer his doing of penance till ſuch time as he is able to ſin no longer, becauſe God requires we ſhould perform this action with cheerfulneſs and freedom, not with reſtraint and of neceſſity; and therefore, he that lets his ſins leave him before he will get rid of them, does not ſeem to leave them ſo much out of choice and freely, as out of a mere neceſſity. This is the reaſon why thoſe perſons who would not return to God, when they had the power of doing it, and yet confeſs their ſins when they are out of the capacity of ſinning any more, will not ſo eaſily obtain their deſires as they imagine they ſhall." Aug. de falſa & vera Penit. And a little lower, ſpeaking of the nature of this converſion, he ſays: "That man is truly converted to God that returns to him with his whole heart, who is not only afraid of puniſhment, but uſes his utmoſt endeavours to obtain God Almighty's graces and favours. Should any body, though at the end of his life, be converted to God after this manner, we ſhould have no reaſon to deſpair of his pardon. But becauſe we ſcarce ever, or at leaſt but very ſeldom, meet with ſuch a perfect converſion as this is in theſe days, we have a great deal of reaſon to be afraid for him who ſtays ſo long before he returns to God; becauſe it is very hard for a man to make a true ſatisfaction, when he finds himſelf overcharged with the pains his ſickneſs puts him to, and frighted with the apprehenſion of puniſhment; and this eſpecially if he ſees his children and his wife before him, for whom he has ſuch irregular love, and reflects upon the world

world which he is juſt going to be taken out of. Now, becauſe there are a great many things which hinder a man from doing penance at this time, it is certain there can be nothing more dangerous, nor which expoſes him more to ruin, than his deferring till death the ſeeking of proper remedies to cure him. What is more yet, I make bold to ſay, that in caſe ſuch a man ſhould obtain pardon for his ſins, he would not therefore be acquitted from the puniſhment due to them, for he muſt be purged and cleanſed firſt by the fire of Purgatory, for having reſerved the fruits of ſatisfaction for the next world; and though this fire is not to laſt for ever, as that of hell is, it is notwithſtanding extremely great, and far beyond all the torments one can poſſibly ſuffer in this world, ſince never any man endured ſo much in this life; no, not even the martyrs themſelves, notwithſtanding the exquiſite pains they have undergone; nor any criminals whatſoever, that have been put to the greateſt tortures that either human wit or cruelty could invent. Let him therefore omit no opportunity of returning from this wicked life, that he may by this means, eſcape thoſe dreadful torments which he muſt otherwiſe expect to ſuffer after death."

3. Theſe are St. Auguſtine's own words; by which you may ſee what danger that man expoſes himſelf to, that defers on purpoſe doing penance till his dying day.

4. St. Ambroſe alſo, in his Book of Penance, which ſome attribute to St. Auguſtine, is very copious upon this matter. And amongſt many other things has theſe words: "If any man deſire the ſacrament of penance as he lies upon his death-bed, and receives it and dies, I own we do not refuſe him what he aſks, but I dare not give you any aſſurance of his going the right way. I tell you again, it is more than I dare affirm, nor will I give you any promiſe of it, becauſe I will not deceive you. Will you then have this doubt cleared? do you deſire to avoid ſuch an uncertainty as this is? do penance for your ſins whilſt you are in good health and able to do it, and then I will give you my word for it, that you are in a good way, becauſe you have done penance for your ſins when you might have encreaſed the number and quality of them: but if, on the contrary, you defer your penance till ſuch time as you are able to ſin no longer, it is not you that leave your ſins, but your ſins leave you." St. Aug. 50 Hom. 4. 52.

5. St. Iſidore has almoſt the ſame thing, though in other words: "Let that man, that has a mind at his death to be certain

certain of having his ſins pardoned him, do penance for them whilſt he is well and able; let him bewail and deplore offences; but if, having lived wickedly all his lifetime, he expects to obtain his pardon when he is dying, he runs a great hazard, becauſe, though he is not ſure he ſhall be damned, he has a great deal of reaſon to doubt of his being ſaved." St. Iſid. L. 2. ſent. c. 13.

6. Theſe authorities of the ſaints are ſufficient ſubjects of our fear; but what Euſebius tells us, St. Jerom, his maſter, ſaid a little before he died, as he lay proſtrate upon the ground and covered with ſackcloth, will put us into a greater apprehenſion and fright. But becauſe it is ſo terrible that I dare not relate it with all the rigour and ſeverity that the Saint ſpoke it, for fear of giving thoſe ſouls that are but weak an occaſion of deſpair, I will refer ſuch as deſire to read it to an epiſtle of Euſebius's to Damaſus, a biſhop, upon the death of this glorious doctor; they will find it in the fourth volume of the Saint's works; after a great many other things he ſays: "He that has perſevered all his lifetime in his ſin may ſay, When I am ready to die, I will do penance and be converted. O! what a melancholy comfort is this! For he that has ſpent his whole life wickedly, without ſo much as ever thinking of penance, unleſs, as it were, in a dream, will be very uncertain of its ſucceſs at that time. For being at this time entangled with worldly affairs, afflicted with the pains of his diſtemper, and diſtracted with the thoughts of his children he muſt part with, and with the love he has for the goods of this life, which he has no hopes to enjoy any longer, how is it poſſible he ſhould be in a diſpoſition to raiſe up his heart towards God and to do true penance, when he is ſurrounded by ſo many afflictions and troubles? It is what he never did as long as he had any hopes of living, nor would he do it now, if he thought he ſhould recover again. Beſides, what kind of penance muſt that be which a man performs when life itſelf is going to leave him? I know ſome of the rich men of this world who have recovered the health of their bodies after dangerous ſickneſſes, but have grown worſe and worſe in that of their ſouls. I believe therefore, and am of opinion, (for it is what I have had ſufficient experience of) that for a man that has always led a wicked life, that has never been afraid of committing any ſin whatever, and that has always been a ſlave to pride and vanity, after all this to make a happy end, is no leſs than an extraordinary miracle." You may ſee, by theſe words of Euſebius, how this holy doctor feared

and

and doubted of the penance which a man, that had never done any all his lifetime before, began to do upon his death-bed.

7. Nor was St. Gregory leſs afraid of what generally happens in this conjuncture; for writing upon theſe words of Job, *What hope can the hypocrite have if he takes away what belongs to another? Will God hear his cry when tribulation ſhall come upon him?* Job xxvii. 8, 9. He ſpeaks thus: "If a man does not hear God's voice when he is in proſperity, God will not hear him in the time of his adverſity. For it is written, *the prayer of that man that turns away his ear from hearing of the law ſhall be curſed*, Prov. xxviii. 9. Holy Job, conſidering how all thoſe that neglect now to do good, when they are ready to die turn themſelves toward God, and beg pardon of him for their crimes, ſays, *What! will God hear the cries of ſuch a people?* Which words of his come very near thoſe of our Saviour, the fooliſh virgins are come at laſt, and cry out, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, Matth. xxv. 11. But immediately anſwer was given, *Verily, I ſay unto you, I know you not.* ver. 12. Becauſe, the greater mercy God ſhews now, the greater ſeverity he will exerciſe then; and the rigour with which he will puniſh then, will be ſo much the heavier, as his goodneſs is the ſweeter, and more merciful now." Thus much St. Gregory. And Hugh of St. Victor ſhews us he is of the ſame opinion with theſe ſaints, when he tells us, in his ſecond Book of the Sacraments, "It is very hard for that penance to be true which comes late, and we have a great deal of reaſon to ſuſpect it when it is forced." Lib. 2. de Sacr. Part. 14. c. 5. Every man can witneſs for himſelf, that he has no deſire to do that which is out of his power to do; for we may eaſily judge of the will by the power; ſo that if you do not do penance when you are able, it is a ſign you have no mind to do it.

8. This is the opinion of the Maſter of the Sentences, when he ſays: "Since true penance is the work of God, he can inſpire it when he ſhall think fit, and reward out of his mercy thoſe whom he might have condemned by his juſtice. But becauſe there are a great many things at that time which divert men from this buſineſs, it is very dangerous, nay, even mortal, to defer the applying of the remedy of penance till the very utmoſt extremity. Nevertheleſs, it is an extraordinary grace of God to inſpire a man with theſe diſpoſitions as he lies upon his death-bed, if there be any ſo inſpired." Lib. 4. diſt. 20. Obſerve how dreadful theſe words are. What a madneſs

a madneſs is it then to expoſe the greateſt treaſure to the moſt imminent dangers? Is there any thing in the world of greater conſequence to you than your ſalvation? What madneſs is it then to hazard ſo precious a jewel?

9. This is the ſentiment of all theſe great doctors; by which you may judge what a madneſs it is to be ſo ſecure, where ſo many ſkilful pilots have ſhewn ſo much concern. The art of dying well ought to be the ſtudy of our whole life, for at the hour of death we have ſo much to do to die, that we have ſcarce any time to learn to die well.

SECTION II.

The Opinions of the Schoolmen upon the ſame Matter.

10. For the farther confirmation of this truth, we muſt ſee what have been the opinions of the ſchoolmen upon this matter. But, above all the reſt, Scotus, in his fourth Book of Sentences, handles this queſtion the moſt to our preſent purpoſe, which he concludes thus: "The great difficulty a man has to do penance at the hour of death, makes the penance he does then to be hardly a true penance." Scot. 9. 4. diſt. 20. art. 1. This he proves by four reaſons.

11. The firſt is, the great hinderance the pains his diſtemper puts him to, and the preſence of death are to him, from lifting up his heart to God and from exerciſing himſelf in the duties and obligations of a ſincere penance. To make this the plainer you are to underſtand, that all the paſſions of our ſoul have a great deal of force to draw man's reaſon and free-will which way they pleaſe. And, according to the maxims of the philoſophers, the paſſions that excite ſorrow are much ſtronger than thoſe that are the cauſes of joy; ſo that the paſſions and affections of a man ready to die are ſtrongeſt; becauſe, as Ariſtotle ſays, "Death is of all terrible things the moſt terrible," by reaſon of the pains and torments the body is in, of the diſquiets and troubles of the ſoul, which are numerous, of the grief and ſorrow which the thoughts of leaving children, wife and the world, then wreck a man with. Now, whilſt the paſſions are ſo ſtrong and turbulent, where muſt the dying man's thoughts and reaſons be but where ſuch violent griefs and paſſions as theſe carry it?

12. We ſee by experience, that even a virtuous man, if he be but troubled with a violent fit of the colic, or with any other ſharp pain whatever, whilſt he is in this condition, can ſcarce have his thought fixed entirely upon God, but, gene-

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rally ſpeaking, lets them go whereſoever his pain carries them. If it be thus with a good and juſt man, what will become of him that never knew what it was to think of God, and who, being always accuſtomed to love his body better than his ſoul, is the more eaſily inclined to run to his greater friend than to his leſs, for help and ſuccour, when he is in any danger? One of thoſe four things which St. Bernard ſays are impediments to contemplation, is the indiſpoſition of the body, becauſe the ſoul is at that time ſo taken up with the thoughts of what the fleſh ſuffers, that ſhe can hardly think of any thing elſe. Serm. 5. de Aſſum. If this be true, what folly is it to expect the greateſt indiſpoſition of body, in order to treat of the greateſt affairs of the ſoul?

13. I knew a perſon myſelf, who, being ready to die and adviſed to prepare himſelf as well as he could for death, was ſo ſurprized and troubled at the nearneſs of it, that all his buſineſs was to deſire, with the more eagerneſs and ſolicitude, ſuch remedies as were the moſt proper for keeping off the ſtroke, if it were poſſible; as if he had imagined he could have puſhed death away with his hands, when it was ſo near him. A prieſt that was by ſeeing him ſo forgetful of what ought to have been at that time his chief concern, adviſed him to lay aſide thoſe cares and ſolicitudes, and to call upon God; the ſick man looking upon this good advice as troubleſome to him, anſwered the prieſt after ſuch a manner as leaſt of all became one in that condition and at ſuch a time; immediately after which he died; and yet this ſame perſon had paſſed for a man of virtue all his lifetime. From hence you may ſee how troubleſome the nearneſs of death will be to men that have loved this life too well, ſince it has been ſo unwelcome to thoſe who, whilſt they lived, ſeemed not to have any extraordinary affection for it.

14. I heard of another perſon, who, being very ill and imagining he had not long to live, deſired to entertain himſelf before he died with none but God, and prevent his judge by the ſervour of his devotion; but the violent and continual pains he was in gave him no kind of eaſe or reſpite, for the accompliſhing of his deſire. What man then will be ſo mad as to defer the reform of his whole life till ſuch a time, when he ſhall find himſelf ſo ill diſpoſed for this buſineſs?

15. The ſecond reaſon this doctor brings is, that true penance ought to be voluntary, that is, to proceed from a free motion of the will, and not to be done purely out of neceſſity. And therefore St. Auguſtine ſays, "That a man ſhould not only

only fear his judge, but love him too, and do what he has to do freely and willingly, not out of neceſſity." De Civit. Dei, L. 14. c. 10. So that, according to this, he that never did true penance all his life, but has put off doing of it till he is ready to die, ſeems to do it only out of neceſſity, not freely and willingly. And if this be the only reaſon of his doing it, it is certain his penance is not purely voluntary.

16. It was ſuch a penance as this that Semei did for the offence he had committed againſt David, when he fled from his ſon Abſalom, 2 Reg. xvi, xix. for ſeeing him return home with victory after his flight, and being ſenſible of the misfortune that might befall him on that account, he went out at the head of a great many men to receive the king, and with ſubmiſſion to beg pardon for what he had done. Whereupon Abiſai, one of David's relations, ſeeing him, cried out, *What! ſhall Semei by theſe words eſcape death, after having curſed the Lord's anointed?* 2 Reg. xix. 21. But David, who knew better than Abiſai, that this ſubmiſſion would do Semei but little good, prudently diſſembling his diſpleaſure for that time, did not let the crime go unpuniſhed; for as he lay upon his death-bed, out of the zeal he had for juſtice, not out of revenge, he commanded his ſon Solomon, as if it had been his laſt will, to deal with the traitor according to his deſerts. 3 Reg. ii. 8, 9. It is ſuch a penance as this ſeveral Chriſtians may be ſaid to perform, who, after having without any interruption offended the majeſty of God during their whole life, when the time of giving up their accounts comes, ſeeing death juſt before them, with the grave open, and themſelves juſt ready to appear before their judge, and at the ſame time underſtanding that there is no force that can reſiſt this ſupreme power, and that the moment is juſt come which is to determine nothing leſs than eternity, they proſtrate themſelves before their judge, begging and entreating him with all kind of humility, and making all the proteſtations imaginable, which, ſuppoſing them to be ſincere, would be profitable, but we may gueſs what they are by the ſucceſs they commonly meet with. For we have ſeen by experience that ſeveral of theſe perſons, after having eſcaped the danger they were in, have immediately neglected all their former promiſes, have taken up all their ill courſes again, and put themſelves a ſecond time under the yoke which they ſeemed before to have been freed from, as if they did nothing out of a motive of virtue and for the love of God, but only becauſe they ſaw themſelves in danger, which was no ſooner over than the good effects, which were cauſed by it, ceaſed.

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17. By which it appears that this kind of penance is juſt like that of ſeamen, when they are in a ſtorm; for every one then makes a great many promiſes and good purpoſes of changing his life, and of labouring for the acquiſition of ſolid virtue; but as ſoon as ever the ſtorm is paſt and they out of all danger, they fall to curſing and gaming again juſt as they did before, and trouble their heads no more about what is paſt, as if all their promiſes had been nothing but mere talk and paſtime.

18. The third reaſon is, becauſe the evil cuſtom of ſinning which a wicked man has lived in all his days, generally ſpeaking, is his conſtant companion till his death, as the ſhadow is that of the body; for cuſtom is like a ſecond nature, which it is very hard to conquer. Thus we ſee, though with grief, ſeveral perſons ſo entirely forgetful of their ſouls at that time, ſo covetous, notwithſtanding they are dying, ſo charmed with the love of life, that they would give any thing in the world to recover it again, as much ſlaves to the world, and to every thing in it they had any affection for, as if they were not reduced to the miſerable extremity they unhappily find themſelves in. Have you never ſeen even old men ſometimes as greedy and as covetous, as buſy about the ſecuring of every little inſignificant trifle, and as much proof againſt charity as ever they were before? Nay, have they not as great a deſire of thoſe things they know they cannot carry away with them? This is a ſort of puniſhment which God frequently inflicts upon ſin, permitting it to go along with its author to the very grave, as St. Gregory expreſſes thus: "God puniſhes a ſinner after this manner, permitting him to forget himſelf at his death, becauſe he never thought of God during his whole life; ſo that one forgetfulneſs is puniſhed by another; that which has all along been a ſin is puniſhed by that which is, at the ſame time, both a puniſhment and a ſin." Homil. 2. in Evang. and in Ezech. Item. Lib. 20. Moral. c. 15. This is what we have daily proofs of: and we have often heard of ſeveral who have died in the very arms of lewd women whom they loved to their own ruin, and would not quit the company of them, not even at the very moment of their death, becauſe, by a juſt judgment of God, they have neither been mindful of themſelves nor of their own ſouls.

19. The fourth reaſon is grounded upon the worth of thoſe actions that are done at this time, for it is plain, at leaſt to one that has any knowledge of God, that he is much leſs pleaſed with the ſervice done him at this time, than with that

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we do him at another. "Becauſe it is no great matter (as the holy virgin and martyr St. Lucy ſaid) to be profuſe of that which you will be forced to leave behind." Surius Dec. 13. What is it for a man to forgive an affront, when it would be a diſhonour not to pardon it? What is it to turn away his miſtreſs, when a man can keep her no longer?

20. From theſe reaſons this doctor concludes, that it is very hard to perform a ſincere penance at that time; nay, he adds more yet, and ſays, "That the Chriſtian who deſignedly defers his penance till he is ready to die, commits a mortal ſin, becauſe he does a great injuſtice to his own ſoul, and expoſes himſelf to the danger of loſing his ſalvation." Is there any thing then in the world we have more reaſon to be afraid of than of this?

SECTION III.

The ſame Thing proved by the Authority of the Holy Scripture.

21. But becauſe the deciſion of this queſtion depends chiefly upon the word of God, which there is no appealing from, nor any exception to be brought againſt, hear now what it ſays upon this point. Solomon, in the firſt chapter of his Proverbs, after ſetting down the words the Eternal Wiſdom makes uſe of for calling of men to repentance, immediately adds thoſe which it will pronounce againſt ſuch perſons as ſhut their ears to this call, thus: *Becauſe I have called, and you have refuſed to come, I have ſtretched out my hand, and there was no one that would take any notice; becauſe you have deſpiſed all my counſel, and have neglected my reproofs, I alſo will laugh at your deſtruction and mock you when that which you were afraid of ſhall befall you. When a ſudden calamity ſhall ruſh upon you, and death ſhall come upon you like a ſtorm when you leaſt expected it: when tribulation, as miſery, ſhall encompaſs you: then they ſhall call upon me, and I will not hear them; they ſhall riſe up in the morning, but ſhall not find me, becauſe they have hated correction and have not had the fear of God before them, nor followed my advice, but have reſiſted all my reproof.* Prov. i. 23,——31. Theſe are Solomon's words, or rather the words of God himſelf, which St. Gregory, in the Book of his Morals cited before, turns to our preſent matter. What anſwer can you make to all this? Will not theſe threats, as coming from God himſelf, be of force to make you afraid of falling into ſuch a danger, and to prepare yourſelf in time againſt this dreadful moment?

22. If this will not ſuffice, give ear to another authority, no leſs clear than this. Our Saviour in the goſpel, ſpeaking of his coming at the day of judgment, with much earneſtneſs adviſes his diſciples to be ready againſt that day, and to this purpoſe brings ſeveral compariſons, to make them underſtand how important a concern this was. *Happy*, ſays he, *is that ſervant whom his maſter when he comes ſhall find watching. But if the bad ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, it will be a great while before my maſter will come, and ſhall begin to beat his fellow-ſervant, and ſhall eat and drink with drunkards; the maſter of that ſervant will come at a day that he does not expect him, and at an hour that he is ignorant of; and he will divide him, and will give him a ſhare amongſt the hypocrites. There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* Matth. xxiv. 46, 48, 49, 50, 51. By this you may ſee that our Saviour was acquainted with the deſigns of the wicked, and the ways they uſe to cloke their crimes. And for this reaſon he meets them, as it were, and tells them what ſhall befall them, and what are like to be the effects of their vain confidence. Now what is it we are treating of but this very buſineſs, and what do I ſay but what our Saviour himſelf ſaid? You are this bad ſervant, who are conceiving the ſame deſigns in your heart, and have a mind to take hold of this delay of your maſter, as an opportunity of ſpending your time in eating and drinking, and of continuing ſtill in your ſins. How comes it you do not dread this threat which is made by God, who is as able to put every thing he ſays in execution as he is to ſay it. It is to you he ſpeaks, it is you he treats with, it is to you he directs his voice; awake then, unhappy man, and amend your life while you have time, for fear of being torn to pieces when the hour of this dreadful judgment ſhall come.

23. Methinks I ſpend too much time about a thing ſo clear; but what ſhall I do when, notwithſtanding all this, I ſee the greateſt part of the world make uſe of this unhappy pretence? That you may therefore have a clearer ſight of the greatneſs of this danger, hear what our Saviour ſays to this purpoſe in another place. He had no ſooner made an end of the above-mentioned words, but he adds theſe which follow: *Then ſhall the kingdom of Heaven be like to ten virgins, five of which were wiſe and five were fooliſh ones.* Matth. xxv. 1. He ſays *then*, and when will this *then* be? when the Judge comes, when the hour of judgment ſhall draw nigh, and not only the general, but each particular judgment, as St. Auguſtine explains this paſſage: becauſe the ſame ſentence that ſhall be paſſed at the particular

cular judgment will ſtand good at the general. Aug. Ep. 80. ad Æſychium. This is the time when what happened to the ten virgins, ſays our Lord, ſhall happen to you. *There were five wiſe and five fooliſh virgins that were waiting for the bridegroom; the wiſe ones furniſhed their lamps with oil betimes, to go out to receive him, but the fooliſh ones neglected to do it. At midnight,* the time of the deepeſt ſleep, that is, when men are not at all ſolicitous and think leaſt of death, *a noiſe was heard, the bridegroom is coming, let us go out and receive him.* Immediately theſe virgins all roſe up, *and they that had prepared their lamps entered with him to the marriage, and the door was ſhut; but thoſe that had not got their lamps ready, began then to dreſs and to fill them, and to call upon the bridegroom,* ſaying, *Lord, Lord, open to us. But he anſwered them, Verily, I know ye not.* With theſe words the Evangeliſt ends the parable, and immediately after tells us the meaning of it, ſaying, *Watch therefore, becauſe you neither know the day nor the hour;* as if he had ſaid, you have ſeen how thoſe virgins proſpered who had got all things ready, and how unhappy on the contrary they were that had not. Therefore ſince you neither know the day nor the hour of his coming, and ſince the buſineſs of your ſalvation depends on your being ready, watch and be always prepared, for fear of being taken before you are aware, like theſe fooliſh virgins, and of periſhing as they did. This is the literal ſenſe of the parable, according to Cajetan, upon this place, where he ſays, "That from this example alone we may draw this conſequence, that penance which is deferred to the very hour of a man's death, when he hears theſe words, behold the bridegroom is coming, is not ſecure. On the contrary, it is looked upon in this parable as falſe, becauſe, generally ſpeaking, it is ſo." And at the end he makes this the reſult of the whole parable, ſaying, "The moral of this doctrine is to let us know, that the five fooliſh virgins were rejected, becauſe they were not prepared when the bridegroom came, whilſt the others, being ready, were admitted. And therefore it is requiſite we ſhould be always ſo, ſince we are ignorant both of the day and hour when he will come." What could be better expreſſed than this is? I wonder therefore, that after ſo plain a proof of this truth men dare comfort themſelves with ſo vain a hope. Were not this truth ſo clear, I ſhould not wonder if they believed the contrary, or endeavoured to deceive themſelves: but after our great Maſter has decided this buſineſs, after the Judge himſelf has explained his laws and judgments by ſo many examples, and has told us how we are to be judged, who can be ſo ſenſeleſs as to

think this buſineſs will fall out quite otherwiſe than he who is to pronounce the ſentence has declared it ſhall.

SECTION IV.

Some Objections anſwered.

24. But perhaps in anſwer to all this you will ſay, What! was not the good thief ſaved by one word ſpeaking at the hour of death? St. Auguſtine anſwers this queſtion for me in the book above cited, where he ſays, "That the confeſſion the good thief made was, all at once, the hour of his converſion, of his baptiſm, and of his death; whence it follows, that as he who dies immediately after being baptized goes directly to Heaven, as has happened to ſeveral perſons, ſo it fared with this happy thief, becauſe the hour of his death was the ſame to him as that of his baptiſm." De vera & falſa pœnit.

25. We may anſwer this query another way, which is, that ſo wonderful an action as this, like all other miracles of the ſame nature, was reſerved to the coming of the Son of God into the world, for a teſtimony of his glory; and therefore it was requiſite that, at the time of our Saviour's paſſion, the Heavens ſhould be darkened, the earth quake, the graves be opened, and the dead ariſe, becauſe theſe prodigies were all kept againſt this time, as ſo many proofs of the glory of him that ſuffered, and amongſt them we may reckon the ſalvation of the good thief; but we muſt here take notice, that this man's confeſſion was no leſs wonderful than his ſalvation; for he confeſſed the kingdom of Heaven, even upon the croſs; he publicly preached the faith of Chriſt preſent when the apoſtles had almoſt loſt all theirs, and praiſed and glorified our Saviour when all the world was blaſpheming and curſing him. Since therefore this miracle, as well as the reſt, was for the manifeſting of our Saviour's dignity and glory at his death, it is a folly to expect that ſhould generally be done at all times which was particularly reſerved for that.

26. Beſides we ſee in all governments there are ordinary and extraordinary methods and ways of proceeding; the ordinary are common to all, the extraordinary for ſome peculiar perſons. The ſame is practiſed in the divine government of God's church, for that is a regular and common method which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, that the end of the wicked ſhall be anſwerable to their works, to ſignify that generally a good death follows a good life, and an ill death an ill life. 2 Cor. xi. The ordinary way of proceeding, that thoſe who have done good works ſhall go into

into life everlaſting, and thoſe who have done evil ſhall be condemned to eternal flames. This is what we find frequently repeated in the holy ſcriptures; it is ſung by the Pſalmiſt, declared by the Prophets, publiſhed by the Apoſtles, and preached by the Evangeliſts. This is what David has explained in a few words, when he ſaid, *The Lord has ſpoken once, and I have heard theſe two things, that power belongs to God, and that mercy is thine, O Lord, becauſe thou wilt reward every man according to his works.* Pſ. lxi. 12, 13. This is the ſum of all Chriſtian philoſophy. Now according to this, we ſay it is uſual for the wicked as well as for the juſt, to be rewarded at the end of this life according to their deſerts, which are to be meaſured by their works. Not that this law is ſo univerſal, but that God can ſhew a particular favour to ſome perſons for his own glory, and grant thoſe the happineſs of dying the death of the juſt who have lived the lives of ſinners; as it can, on the contrary, happen that a man may, by a ſecret judgment of God, die the death of a ſinner that has lived all his lifetime like a juſt man; as a merchant after a proſperous voyage may be loſt as he is entering the port. For which reaſon Solomon ſaid, *Who knows whether the ſpirit of the ſons of Adam mounts upwards, and if that of beaſts goes downwards?* Eccl. iii. 21. Becauſe though it generally happens that the ſouls of thoſe men who live like beaſts go down to hell, and that the ſouls of thoſe who live like rational creatures mount up to Heaven, yet by ſome ſpecial judgment of God the contrary may fall out in both reſpects; but notwithſtanding all this, the ſecure and general doctrine is, that whoſoever lives well ſhall die happily. For this reaſon, nobody ought to rely on the examples of particular graces, ſince they do not make any general rule, nor belong to all indifferently, but to a very few indeed, and thoſe unknown; ſo that you can have no aſſurance of your being of this number.

27. Others make uſe of another pretence, and ſay, the ſacraments of the new law make contrition of attrition, and that they ſhall be in this diſpoſition, at leaſt when they are dying, which, joined to the virtue of the ſacraments, will ſuffice for the obtaining of their ſalvation. My anſwer is, that it is not any ſort of ſorrow that will ſuffice for that kind of attrition, which, joined to ſacraments, produces grace in thoſe perſons that receive them. For it is certain there are ſeveral ſorts of attrition and ſorrow, and that it is not any kind of it that changes a man's attrition into contrition, but only that which is known by no one but by him who is the giver of all grace.

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28. The holy doctors have not been unacquainted with this truth, and therefore it is that they have ſpoken of penance with ſo much fear and apprehenſion, as we have ſhewn already. And St. Auguſtine, in the firſt authority cited in confirmation of this doctrine, ſpeaking of him that receives penance and is reconciled by the ſacraments of the church, ſays expreſly, "We adminiſter the ſacrament of penance to the ſinner, but we give him no aſſurance." De 50. Hom. 42.

29. But if after this you ſhould urge farther, and object the penance of the Ninevites to me, which proceeded from the apprehenſion they were in of being deſtroyed within forty days, I would have you reflect not only on the rigorous penance they performed, but the change of their lives, and do you change your life as they did theirs, and you will not fail of finding the ſame mercy they did. But when I ſee you have no ſooner recovered your health than you return to your former evil courſes, and neglect all the good reſolutions you had made during your ſickneſs, what would you have me think of ſuch penance as this is?

The Concluſion of this Chapter.

30. All we have ſaid here has not been to ſhut the gates, either of ſalvation or hope upon any one; which the ſaints have not done, nor ought any of us to do it. Our only deſign is to turn the wicked out of this ſtrong hold, in which they always take ſhelter, that they may continue in their ſins with the more ſecurity. Tell me now, I beſeech you by the love of God, how dare you expoſe yourſelf to ſo imminent a ruin, when you have all the doctors and ſaints of the church, when you have reaſon itſelf, nay, and the holy ſcriptures, continually admoniſhing you of the danger of this penance? What is it you have to truſt to at that laſt hour? Is it to the legacies you bequeath in your will for pious uſes? Is it to the prayers and maſſes you order to be ſaid for you? Alas! you have ſeen how ſolicitous the fooliſh virgins were to ſupply themſelves with what was requiſite, and what entreaties they uſed at the door with the bridegroom, but all to no purpoſe, becauſe nothing of all this proceeded from a true penance. Do you truſt in the tears you ſhall ſhed then? Tears, it is true, have a great force at all times, and happy is the man that weeps without hypocriſy and conſtraint; but conſider what floods of tears it coſt him who ſold his birthright to ſatisfy his gluttony, and yet the Apoſtle tells us, *That he had no place for penance, though it was what he ſought after with ſo many tears,* Heb.

Heb. xii. 17. for it was not for God's ſake that he wept, but for the loſs he had ſuffered. You, perhaps, rely upon the good reſolutions you ſhall make at that time. Theſe go a great way when they are ſincere; but call to mind the good deſigns which king Antiochus propoſed to himſelf, as he lay upon his death-bed; he made ſuch great promiſes to God, that we cannot ſo much as read them without admiration and aſtoniſhment, and yet after all the ſcripture ſays, *That this wicked man prayed to God, from whom he was not like to obtain any mercy*, 2 Macch. ix. 13. And why, but becauſe all he promiſed was not out of a motive of love, but of ſervile fear; which, though it is good, is not yet ſufficient of itſelf for the gaining of the kingdom of Heaven: for to be afraid of hell torments is what may proceed from the natural love and affection every man has for himſelf; but for a man to love himſelf, is not a means whereby he can poſſibly arrive at this kingdom. So that as nobody had admittance into king Aſſuerus's palace that was clothed in ſackcloath, ſo nobody can enter into the kingdom of Heaven in the dreſs of a ſlave, that is, by the means of this ſervile fear alone, unleſs he be cloathed with his wedding garment, which is love. Eſther iv. 2.

31. Conſider therefore ſeriouſly, now whilſt you have time before you, that you muſt without doubt be one day or other in this condition; nay, the time cannot be far off, for you ſee what haſte the Heavens make to finiſh their courſes. This mortal life of ours, which is no more than a ſmall flock of wool, will be ſoon ſpun out, whilſt the wheel is perpetually turning round with ſo ſwift a motion. For this reaſon Moſes ſays, *That the day of perdition is nigh, and that the ſeaſons come upon us very faſt*, Deut. xxxii. 35. When you have run this ſhort courſe, will follow the fulfilling of theſe propheſies, and then you will ſee how true a prophet I have been in all I have foretold you; then you will find yourſelf ſurrounded with pains, diſturbed by cares, tormented by the preſence of death, and in continual expectation of the lot which is immediately to befall you. O doubtful lot! O dreadful paſſage! O terrible trial, in which is to be paſſed the ſentence, either of eternal life or of eternal death! Who will be able then to change their lots? who will put a ſtop to this ſentence? It is at preſent in your own power to do it, do not neglect the opportunity. You have now a convenient time to make your Judge, now you may gain his favour. Take therefore the advice of the Prophet along with you, who ſays, *Seek the Lord whilſt he*

he is to be found, call upon him whilſt he is near, Iſa. iv. 6. He is now near to hear us, though we cannot ſee him; when we are to be judged we ſhall ſee him, but he will not hearken to us, unleſs we now do ſomething to deſerve it.

CHAP. III.

Againſt thoſe who continue in their Sins, confiding in the Mercy of God.

1. THERE are others who continue in their wicked lives, confiding in God's mercies and in the merits of our Saviour's paſſion, whom it is requiſite to undeceive, as well as the reſt. You ſay the mercy of God is great, ſince he died upon the croſs for the ſalvation of ſinners: I confeſs it is very great, ſince it bears with ſo great a blaſphemy as is making his goodneſs the motive of your wickedneſs, and turning the croſs which he made uſe of as his inſtrument, for the deſtroying the kingdom of ſin, into an inſtrument for eſtabliſhing and promoting it; and whereas you are obliged to lay down a thouſand lives, if you had them, in return of that which he laid down for you, you take occaſion from thence to deny him that ſingle life you have received from him? This crime was a greater affliction to our Saviour than the death he ſuffered; for though he never complained of his ſufferings, yet he does of this injury by the Prophet, ſaying, *Sinners have built upon my back, they have extended their iniquity*, Pſ. cxxviii. 3. Who is it that taught you to deduce this conſequence, that becauſe God is good you will take the liberty of ſinning, and eſcape without being puniſhed. The Holy Ghoſt does not teach us to argue after that manner, but thus: Becauſe God is good he deſerves to be honoured, obeyed and loved above all things; becauſe God is good it is juſt I ſhould be ſo too, and that I ſhould hope in his mercy for the pardon of ſins, though they be ever ſo great, if I do but return to him with my whole heart; becauſe God is good and infinitely good, it will be the greater crime in me to offend ſo much goodneſs: and for this reaſon, the greater you ſuppoſe this mercy, which you put your truſt in, ſo much the more heinous is every ſin you commit againſt it. Nor is it juſt that ſuch a crime ſhould go unpuniſhed; nay, it belongs to the Divine juſtice to take care it ſhould not; neither is this juſtice, as you falſely perſuade

ſuade yourſelf, oppoſite to the Divine goodneſs, but is its ſiſter and protectreſs, and cannot by any means conſent that ſuch a crime ſhould paſs unpuniſhed.

2. This ſort of excuſe is not new, but has been long uſed in the world. This was the diſpute between the true and falſe prophets; for thoſe coming from Almighty God threatened the people with the execution of his juſtice; theſe ſpeaking of their own head, promiſed them a falſe peace and mercy: and as ſoon as ever God's heavy judgments had diſcovered the truth of the one, and the lies of the others, the true prophets ſaid, *Where are now your prophets who propheſied to you, and ſaid, the king of Babylon,* (that is, Nebuchadnezzar) *ſhall not come upon you?* Jer. xxxviii. 18.

3. You ſay God is very merciful, but believe me, whoſoever you are that ſay ſo, he has not opened your eyes yet to let you ſee how great his juſtice is; for if he had you would cry out with the Prophet, *Who is there, O Lord, that knows the power of thy wrath, and who can meaſure the greatneſs of thy indignation for fear?* Pſ. lxxxix. 11.

4. That you may the more clearly perceive the danger of this miſtake, let us go hand in hand together awhile. Neither you nor I have ever ſeen God's juſtice, as it is in itſelf, to know how far it reaches, nor have we any other way of knowing God in this world but by his works. Let us then go now into this ſpiritual world of the holy ſcriptures, and when we have been there a little while we will come into this corporal world we live in, to take a view in each of them, of the effects of the Divine juſtice, that we may be the better able to know what it is.

5. This journey will be very advantageous to us; for beſides the end we propoſe to ourſelves, we ſhall receive another very conſiderable benefit, which is, the exciting and nouriſhing of the fear of God in our hearts, which the ſaints tell us is the treaſure, the defence, and the ballaſt of our ſoul. So that as a veſſel is not ſafe unleſs it be well poiſed and ballaſted, becauſe any guſt of wind may overſet her, ſo neither can the ſoul be ſecure if it wants the weight of this fear. It is fear keeps her from being carried away and overturned by the winds, either of human or divine favours; whereas, let her be ever ſo richly fraught, ſhe is perpetually in danger of being caſt away whilſt ſhe wants this ballaſt. It is neceſſary then, that not only thoſe who are juſt entered into God's ſervice, but even thoſe who have been a long time in his family, ſhould live continually in fear; nor is this virtue required in ſinners only

who

who have motives enough to excite them to it, but alſo in the juſt, who have not done ſo much as the others have to be afraid of; the ſubject of thoſe perſons fear is, becauſe they have fallen already, the motive theſe have is, leſt they ſhould fall; the one ought to be afraid, becauſe of their paſt ſins, and the others upon the account of the dangers they may probably be expoſed to.

6. If you would know how this holy fear is to be produced within you, I tell you, that when it is once infuſed into your ſoul by grace, it is preſerved and increaſed there, by frequent reflections on the effects of God's juſtice, which we are now going to treat of. Let theſe be the frequent entertainment of your thoughts, and you will find this fear will by degrees be formed in you.

SECTION I.

Of the Effects of the Divine Juſtice mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

7. The firſt effect of God's juſtice which the holy ſcripture ſpeaks of is, the reprobation of the angels. The beginning of the ways of God was firſt ſhewn upon the prince of the devils, as we find it in the book of Job, ch. xl. 14. *For ſince all the ways of God are mercy and juſtice*, Pſ. xxiv. 10. his juſtice, till this firſt crime, had never manifeſted itſelf. It was ſhut up in the boſom of God like a ſword in its ſcabbard, which the Prophet Ezechiel was frighted at, when he conſidered what deſtruction it would make, Ezec. xxi. This firſt ſin it was that made God draw the ſword, and conſider what a terrible blow the firſt was. Do but look up and you will ſee what a great deal of hurt it has done; you will ſee one of the richeſt jewels of God's houſe, one of the greateſt ornaments of Heaven, a draught which gives ſo lively a repreſentation of the Divine ſplendour and beauty, *fall down from Heaven like a flaſh of lightning*, for one proud thought, Luc. x. 18. He that was before the prince of angels, was made the chief of devils; he that was before ſo very beautiful and glorious, became as oppoſitely deformed and ugly; he that was crowned before with the greateſt glory, was condemned to the ſevereſt torments; he that was before God's greateſt favourite, was changed into his greateſt enemy, and ſo will continue for all eternity. What a ſubject of admiration muſt this be to thoſe heavenly ſpirits, who very well know from whence and whither that ſo noble a creature fell? With what aſtoniſhment will they

they repeat theſe words of Iſaiah, ch. xiv. 12. *How are you fallen from Heaven, O lucifer, you who roſe in the morning!*

8. Deſcend from Heaven to the terreſtrial paradiſe, and you will there ſee another fall, no leſs terrible than the former, had it not been retrieved, Gen. iii. For if the angels fell, every one of them had committed an actual ſin, which was the occaſion of his fall. But what actual ſin has an infant been guilty of to deſerve to be ſent into the world a child of wrath and indignation? There is no need of any actual ſin for this, it is enough to be deſcended from one that ſinned, and by ſinning infected the very root of all human nature, which was in him, that ſo the child may be born with that ſin, ſo great is the glory and majeſty of God that a creature, for one offence committed againſt it, deſerves no leſs a puniſhment than this is. If Aman, Aſſuerus's creature, Eſther iii. did not look upon himſelf as ſatisfied, when he was revenged of Mardocheus, whom he imagined to be the man that had injured and abuſed him; but, on the contrary, thought his greatneſs obliged him to deſtroy all the Jews, for the affront which one ſingle man had offered him; what great matter then is it, for God Almighty's glory and infinite greatneſs to exact ſuch a puniſhment? Conſider then the firſt man turned out of paradiſe for eating of one morſel, for which the whole world has been ever ſince condemned to hunger and want. After the revolution of ſo many ages the infant child carries the mark of his father's wound along with him, and is made a child of wrath, not only before he is capable of committing any ſin, but even before he is born. This injury is not put up yet, though it is ſo long ſince it was done, though it has been divided amongſt ſo many millions of men, and has been ſo often and ſo ſeverely puniſhed. On the contrary, all thoſe torments that have been ſuffered in the world to this very day, all the deaths that have been hitherto, and all the ſouls that have been burning in hell-fire ſince the fall of the angels, or that ſhall burn there for all eternity, are nothing but ſo many effects of this firſt crime, and ſo many proofs of the Divine juſtice. Nay, what is ſtill more aſtoniſhing, it continues notwithſtanding the redemption of the world by the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. And yet if man had not had this remedy applied to him there would have been no difference at all betwixt him and a devil, becauſe the one would have had as great a probability of obtaining his ſalvation as the other. Are not theſe proofs of the Divine juſtice ſtrong enough to convince you?

9. But

9. But as if this yoke, which the ſons of Adam have ſo long groaned under were not heavy enough, there have been from that time downward new additions of puniſhments upon puniſhments for new ſins, which have taken their riſe from this firſt ſin. The whole world was drowned by the deluge, Gen. vii. God rained down fire and brimſtone from Heaven upon five lewd cities, Gen. xix. The earth opened and ſwallowed up Dathan and Abiron alive for contending with Moſes, Num. xvi. Aaron's two ſons, Nadab and Abiu, for omitting of one ſingle ceremony in their ſacrifice, were burnt on a ſudden by the fire of the ſanctuary, without finding any mercy, either upon the conſideration of their own dignity, as prieſts, or their father's ſanctity, or the familiarity which Moſes, their uncle, had with God, Levit. x. We read in the New Teſtament, that Ananias and Sapphira, for lying to St. Peter, in a matter which did not ſeem to be of any very great moment, fell down dead both of them upon the ſpot, Acts. v.

10. What ſhall I ſay of God's dreadful judgments? Solomon, the wiſeſt amongſt the children of men, for whom God had ſuch a tender love that he commanded him to be called the *beloved of the Lord*; came at laſt, by God's unſearchable judgments, to fall into the worſt and greateſt of all ſins, viz. the adoring of idols, 2 Reg. xii. 24. 3 Reg. xi. Can there be any thing more dreadful than this is? And yet if you did but know how many judgments of the ſame nature happen every day in the church, you would perhaps be no leſs ſurprized at them than at all has been ſaid. For you would ſee a great many ſtars fallen from Heaven, you would ſee ſeveral perſons that have been invited to God's table, and have been fed with the bread of angels, brought into ſuch a miſerable condition as to long after the food of ſwine to ſatisfy their hunger, Luke xv; you would ſee a great number of chaſte ſouls more beautiful and more glorious than the ſun, ſullied all over and darker than the midnight ſky; all which was occaſioned by the ſins and offences they fell into; for God's decrees and judgments lay no neceſſity upon men's actions, nor deprive them of their free will.

11. But what is ſtill more, could there be a greater proof of this juſtice, than that God ſhould not be ſatisfied with any leſs ſatisfaction than the death of his only begotten Son, to purchaſe pardon for mankind? Can any words be more moving than thoſe of our Saviour to the women that followed him when he went to be crucified; *O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, do not weep over me, but weep over yourſelves and over your children;*

dren; for behold the days ſhall come in which they ſhall ſay, happy thoſe women that are barren, and the wombs which have not conceived, and the breaſts which have not given ſuck. Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the mountains, fall upon us; and to the hills, cover us. Becauſe if they do theſe things to the green-wood, what will they do to the dry? Luke xxiii. 28, 29, 30, 31. As if he had ſaid more clearly, If this tree of life and of innocence, upon which there has never been any worm, ruſt of ſin, burns thus by the flames of the Divine juſtice for the ſins of other perſons, what will become of the barren and dry tree which not charity, but malice, has overloaded with its own crimes? How rigorous therefore muſt God's juſtice be in thoſe other works of his, in which mercy does not exert itſelf, ſince it is ſo ſevere in this, which is the effect of an infinite goodneſs?

12. But if you are ſo dull as not to ſee the force of theſe arguments, reflect upon the eternity of hell torments, and conſider how terrible this juſtice is, which for a ſin of but one moment condemns the ſoul to nothing leſs than pains everlaſting. This dreadful juſtice ſuits very well with the mercy you ſo highly commend. Can any thing be ſo dreadful as to ſee how this great God, ſeated upon the throne of his glory, will from thence look down upon a ſoul after it has been tormented millions of years in ſuch a terrible manner, without being moved to the leaſt pity and compaſſion? On the contrary, he will take a pleaſure in ſuch a ſoul's ſufferings, and will never put an end or limit to them, nor give it any hopes of ever finding eaſe. O wonders of the Divine juſtice! O ſubject of our aſtoniſhment and admiration! O the unfathomable depth of this abyſs! Who is there ſo unreaſonable and ſenſeleſs as not to tremble at the thoughts of ſo dreadful a puniſhment?

SECTION II.

Of the Effects of the Divine Juſtice which are to be ſeen in this World.

13. Let us now leave the holy ſcripture, and come to this viſible world, and we ſhall there find other effects of a moſt terrible and moſt ſevere juſtice. They who are ever ſo little enlightened with the knowledge of God, live, whilſt they are in this world, in ſuch fear and apprehenſion of theſe effects of juſtice, that, though they are able to conceive all the reſt of God's works, yet they cannot do ſo in reſpect of this, but are forced to content themſelves with a ſincere and humble

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act of faith. Who is there that is not ſurprized to ſee the whole face of the earth covered over with infidelity? to ſee what a nurſery the devil has here to people hell? to ſee that the greateſt part of the world has been as much overſhadowed with the darkneſs of its errors, even ſince our Saviour's death, as it was before? What is all the Chriſtian world in compariſon to what the infidels poſſeſs, and to what is diſcovered every day? All the reſt is under the tyranny of the prince of darkneſs, without the leaſt glimmering of the ſun of juſtice? There the light of truth has never ſhone out; there no more rain or dew falls down from Heaven than uſed to do upon the mountains of Gelboe, 2 Reg. iii. From thence the devils ſtill continue to carry off a great number of ſouls every day to everlaſting flames, as they have done ever ſince the beginning of the world. For as in the time of the deluge no one eſcaped that was not in Noah's ark, Gen. vii. as none of the inhabitants of Jericho were ſaved but Rahab and her family, ſo neither can any body be ſaved but thoſe of the houſe of God, that is the church, Joſ. vi. 2 Pet. iii.

14. Conſider again, in this little ſpot of the world which the Chriſtians poſſeſs, how every body behaves himſelf, and you will ſee, that in all this myſtical body there is ſcarce one ſound part, from the ſole of the feet to the crown of the head, Iſai. i. Lay aſide but a very few of the chief cities, where you may ſee ſome marks of ſound doctrine, and run over all the other towns and countries, where they have no notion of the true worſhip, and you will find many places of which we may truly ſay what God ſaid once of Jeruſalem, *Go round about the ways of Jeruſalem, and look in the ſtreets to ſee if you can find a man that is truly juſt, and I will ſhew mercy towards him*, Jerem. v. 1. I do not deſire you to run up and down the market places, or to public houſes, which are for the moſt part full of nothing but lying and deceit. Do but conſider what paſſes in your neighbours families, and, as Jeremy ſays, do but give an ear to what they ſay, and you will ſcarce hear any one good word amongſt them, Jerem. viii. 6. Go where you will, and you will hear nothing but murmuring, detracting, ſwearing, blaſpheming, quarrelling, coveting and fighting. In fine, the tongue and the heart entertain themſelves every where with the things of this world, and with the ways of promoting their intereſts, whilſt at the ſame time God and heavenly things are what they trouble themſelves about but little, unleſs it be in blaſpheming and ſwearing by his holy name. Such a remembrance as this God himſelf complained

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of by his Prophet, ſaying, *They remember me, but not in truth and juſtice, but only in ſwearing falſely by my name*, Iſa. xlviii. 1. Zach. v. So that a man can hardly tell, at leaſt by what he ſees, whether theſe perſons are Chriſtians or Heathens, except perhaps by the high towers and ſteeples he ſees at a diſtance, and by the oaths and perjuries he hears when he comes nearer. What pretence then have ſuch perſons to reckon themſelves in the number of thoſe of whom Iſaiah ſaid, *All that ſhall ſee them ſhall know them, becauſe they are the ſeed which the Lord has bleſſed*, Iſa. lxi. 9. If therefore the life of a Chriſtian ought to be ſuch, that every body that ſees ſhall acknowledge him to be a child of God, what rank ſhall we put thoſe in who rather ſeem to deſpiſe and laugh at Jeſus Chriſt, than to live as become Chriſtians?

15. How can you chuſe but ſee by this the effects of God's juſtice, ſince the crimes of the world are ſo many and ſo great? For that the permitting men to fall into ſin is one of the greateſt puniſhments, and one of the moſt manifeſt ſigns of God's anger, is a truth as undeniable, as that the preſerving a ſoul from ſin is one of the greateſt favours he is capable of receiving from God. Thus we read, in the Book of Kings, that God's anger was kindled againſt the children of Iſrael, and therefore he permitted David to fall into that ſin of pride, of ordering Joab to go number the people, 2 Reg. xxiv. We read in Eccleſiaſticus, *That God will preſerve the merciful men from all evil, and will not permit them to be entangled in their ſins*, Eccl. xxiii. 16. For as one part of the reward due to virtue is the increaſe of virtue itſelf, ſo it frequently happens that the puniſhment of one ſin is the permiſſion to fall into another. Thus we ſee the ſevereſt puniſhments inflicted for the moſt heinous ſin that ever was committed in the world, to wit, the putting of the Son of God to death, was that which the Prophet threatened the authors of this crime with, when he ſaid, *Add iniquity, O Lord, to their iniquity, and let them not enter into thy juſtice*, Pſ. lxviii. 28. that is to ſay, permit them not to keep and obey thy commandments. And what follows from all this? The ſame Prophet tells us himſelf, in the next verſe, where he ſays, *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and let them not be written amongſt the juſt*, Ibid. ver. 29.

16. If therefore God's puniſhing of one ſin by permitting another be ſo ſevere a puniſhment, and ſo great a proof of his anger, how is it poſſible you ſhould not ſee the marks of the Divine juſtice amongſt ſuch a number of ſins as are even in vogue and reputation in the world? Turn your eyes which way you pleaſe,

pleaſe, and you ſhall ſcarce ſee any thing but ſins, like men in the midſt of the ſea that have no other object but ſky and water. And can you ſee all theſe ſins without ſeeing juſtice too? can you be in the middle of the ocean, and ſee no water? And if all this world is nothing but an ocean of ſins, it muſt needs be an ocean of juſtice. There is no need of going down into hell to ſee how the Divine juſtice manifeſts itſelf there, we may ſee it plainly enough in this world.

17. But if you can ſee nothing beyond yourſelf, at leaſt look into yourſelf; conſider that if you are in the ſtate of ſin, you are under the ſtroke of this juſtice, and are then moſt expoſed to it when you think you are moſt ſecure. St. Auguſtine was once in this condition, as he himſelf acknowledges, when he ſays, "I was drowned in the depth of ſin, your anger was provoked againſt me, and I knew nothing of it; I was quite deaf to the noiſe which the chains of my mortality made, and this ignorance of your anger and of my fault was a puniſhment of the pride of my ſoul." Conf. L. 2. c. 2. Now if God has inflicted this kind of puniſhment upon you, and has permitted you to remain blind for ſo long a time, and to be drowned in your iniquities, how can you falſely imagine yourſelf to be in ſo happy a condition, when all things go ſo ill with you? Let him that is in favour with God talk of his graces and mercies, but he that ſuffers the rigour of his juſtice ſhould talk of nothing but his juſtice. Will God, out of his mercy, permit you to live ſo long in your ſins, and not permit you to run headlong into hell, out of his juſtice? O that you did but know how ſmall the diſtance is betwixt ſin and the puniſhment, and betwixt grace and glory. When a man is in the ſtate of grace, what great matter is it to make him partaker of glory, or to puniſh him when he has committed any ſin? Grace is the beginning and purchaſe of glory, ſo ſin is an introduction and high way to hell.

18. Beſides, what can be more terrible than to ſee that though the pains of hell are ſo dreadful, as we have deſcribed them, God ſhould permit ſo great a number to be damned, and ſo few to be ſaved. But that you may not think I deſign to impoſe upon you, when I ſay that this number is ſo very ſmall, *he that counts the ſtars in the Heavens, and calls them all by their names*, will tell you the ſame, Pſ. cxlvi. 4. Can any man, without aſtoniſhment and fright, hear theſe words of our Saviour, which are ſo well known, and yet ſo little underſtood and regarded; they are his words to his diſciples, when he anſwered them the queſtion, whether the number of the elect was

ſmall

ſmall or not: *Enter*, ſays he, *at the narrow gate, becauſe broad is the gate and open is the way which leads to deſtruction, and many there are that walk in it: O how narrow is the gate and how ſtraight is the way which leads to life, and there are but few that find it!* Matth. vii. 13, 14. Luke. Who can imagine how our Saviour was moved, when he cried out, not in a cold and indifferent manner, but with ſuch an emphatic exclamation, *O how narrow is the gate, and how ſtraight is the way*, Ibid. ver. 14.

19. All the world was deſtroyed by the waters of the deluge, and only eight ſouls were preſerved in Noah's ark, Gen. vii. which, according to St. Peter, repreſents the ſmall number of the elect, in compariſon of the reprobate, 2 Pet. ii. 5. God brought ſix-hundred thouſand men out of Egypt, without counting their wives and children, to lead them into the land of promiſe; and for this end he aſſiſted and favoured them in ſeveral reſpects, in a peculiar manner, Exod. xii. yet after all, they, by their own fault, loſt the land which God of his grace had offered them, and only two men out of this great number that had the happineſs to go into it, Num. xiv. 30. From whence all the holy fathers unanimouſly conclude, that this is a figure of the great number of thoſe that are damned, and of the few that are ſaved; which is the meaning of theſe words, *that many are called, but few are choſen*, Matth. xx. 16. For this reaſon the juſt in ſeveral places of holy ſcripture are called *precious ſtones;* to give us to underſtand that juſt men are as rarely to be found in the world as precious ſtones, and that the number of the wicked as far exceeds that of the good, as the number of the ordinary ſtones does that of the precious: as Solomon declared to us, when he ſaid, *The number of fools is infinite*, Eccleſ. i. 15. If therefore the number of the elect is ſo ſmall and ſo ſoon reckoned up as the figure repreſents it to us, and as truth itſelf tells us, for you ſee how many perſons were by a juſt judgment of God deprived of the happineſs they were called to, how can you ſtand ſo unconcerned in this common danger and univerſal deluge? If the number of the elect were equal to that of the damned, you would ſtill have ſufficient reaſon to fear for yourſelf: but what do I talk of being equal? for to be damned to hell for all eternity is a miſery ſo great, that though there were but one perſon out of the whole race of mankind to be ſent thither, each particular man ought to tremble for fear of himſelf. When our Saviour told his diſciples, as he was at ſupper with them, *that one amongſt them was to betray him*, John xiii. 21. they all began

to be afraid, though their own conſciences told them they were innocent; becauſe when a crime is very heinous, though it touch but few, every one is afraid leſt he ſhould have ſome ſhare in it. If a great army of men were ſtanding in a field, and ſhould underſtand by Divine revelation that a thunderbolt was to fall and take one of them off, none knowing who it was to be, every one would be afraid leſt he ſhould be the perſon, and look upon the danger as his own. What then would their apprehenſion be if half the army, or the greater part, were to be deſtroyed by this thunderbolt. Tell me now, you that are ſo wiſe in all worldly affairs, but a mere brute to what regards your ſalvation, ſince God here reveals to you that the thunder of his Divine juſtice will fall upon ſo great a number of perſons, and ſo few ſhall eſcape it, how can you live ſo unconcerned and fearleſs, when you know not which of the two parties you belong to? Is hell to be dreaded leſs than thunder? Has God given you any ſecurity for your ſalvation? There is nothing that can give you any certainty of it. Your own works condemn you, and as the caſe now ſtands, unleſs you turn over a new leaf you are one of the reprobates, and can you ſtill be unconcerned at your danger?

20. You ſay God's mercy encourages you; that is no anſwer to what has been ſaid; on the contrary, if the permitting of ſo many perſons to be damned be not incompatible with his mercy, why may it not as well ſuffer you to be one of that number, if you live as they have done? Do not you perceive, unhappy creature, that ſelf-love deludes you, making you think better of yourſelf than of all the world beſides? What privilege have you above the reſt of the children of Adam, not to go where all thoſe whoſe works you imitate have been ſent before you?

21. If, as I have proved already, God is to be known by his works, I may ſafely ſay, that though we may make a great many compariſons betwixt his mercy and his juſtice, in which his mercy will always be ſuperior, yet we ſhall find at laſt that there are more veſſels of wrath in the race of Adam, from which you deſcend, than there are of mercy, becauſe the number of the damned is ſo far greater than that of the elect, 2 Tim. ii. 20. Rom. ix. 22, 23. Now this does not happen for want of God's grace and aſſiſtance (for he, as the Apoſtle tells us, would have all men ſaved and come to the knowledge of the truth) but through the fault of the wicked, who will not make their advantage of God's mercies.

22. All I have hitherto ſaid has been to convince you, that if it is not incompatible with that infinite mercy of God you talk

talk of, to permit ſo many infidels in the world, and ſo many bad Chriſtians in the church, and to ſuffer all theſe infidels and ſo great a number of theſe Chriſtians to be loſt for ever, it will be no leſs agreeable to it that you ſhould periſh with them, if you behave yourſelf like them. Did the Heavens ſmile upon you at your birth, or were the decrees of God and the laws of the goſpel changed in favour of you, that you ſhould expect to be ſingular in the world? If it be no prejudice to this great mercy, that hell ſhould enlarge its womb, and that ſo many thouſands of ſouls ſhould be ſwallowed up by it every day, what greater prejudice will it receive, if you who live as they did ſhould be ſwallowed up amongſt them? And leſt you ſhould ſay, that God was ſevere and rigorous then, but is mild and merciful now, conſider that, notwithſtanding all his mildneſs, there is nothing of what you have heard which he does not permit to this very day; ſo that you may have juſt cauſe to fear puniſhment though you be a Chriſtian, if you are a bad one.

23. Will it be any leſſening to God's glory, if you alone ſhould fail of being admitted to it? Have you any extraordinary qualities which God ſtands particularly in need of, to make him bear with you and all your faults? Or have you any particular privilege above other men which ſecures you from being damned, as well as they, if you are as wicked? Since David's children who were favoured, in conſideration of their father's deſerts, were puniſhed by God, according to their crimes, whenever they did wickedly, and ſeveral of them came to unfortunate ends, can you be puffed up with a vain confidence, and imagine yourſelf to be ſecure? 3 Reg. ii. 4 Reg. xiv. Abſalom, Ammon, Adonias. You deceive yourſelf, unhappy man, you deceive yourſelf if you think this is hoping in God: this is not hope, but preſumption; for hope is a confidence that God will forgive all your ſins, though ever ſo many or ſo great, if you repent and amend. But it is preſumption to believe, that though you perſiſt in a wicked life your ſalvation is ſecure. And do not think this is an indifferent ſort of ſin, for it is accounted one of thoſe againſt the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe it is an abuſe and affront to the goodneſs of God which is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghoſt, which ſins our Saviour has told us are not forgiven in this world, nor in the next; to ſignify that they are very hard to be forgiven, becauſe they, as much as in them lies, ſhut up the gate of grace, and offend the phyſician that is to heal us.

The Concluſion.

24. We will conclude this matter with the diſcovery which the author of Eccleſiaſticus makes us of this error, in theſe words: *Do not loſe the fear which you ought to be in, on account of your ſins being pardoned you; and do not ſay, the mercy of the Lord is great, he will not remember the multitude of my ſins. For his anger and his mercy are very near to one another, and his wrath looks upon ſinners,* Eccl. v. 6, 7. If we are commanded to be afraid, even for thoſe ſins which have been pardoned already, tell me how is it poſſible you ſhould be free from fear, who daily increaſe the number of your ſins? Reflect well upon theſe words: *The wrath of the Lord looks upon ſinners,* becauſe the underſtanding of this whole diſcourſe depends upon it. To this end, you are to know that though the mercy of God extends itſelf to ſinners as well as to the juſt, and that every man partakes of it, either by being preſerved by it, as ſome are, from falling into ſin, or by being reclaimed from ſin, as others are, and expected to do penance; notwithſtanding all this, thoſe extraordinary favours which God promiſes in his ſcriptures belong particularly to the juſt, to whom he is, in every point, as good as his word; becauſe they have not failed in their promiſe to him, which was, to obſerve his commandments with all the exactneſs and fidelity imaginable: and becauſe they have been obedient and dutiful children to him, therefore he ſhews himſelf a loving and tender Father to them. But as for all thoſe threats and curſes which you may read in the holy ſcripture, and all thoſe rigours and ſeverities of the Divine juſtice, perſuade yourſelf they are aimed at you and all ſuch as are like you. How great then muſt your blindneſs be, if you are not afraid of thoſe threats which are addreſſed immediately to you; but, on the contrary, feed yourſelf up with the hopes of thoſe favours which were not promiſed you? Take you what falls to your ſhare, and let the juſt have what belongs to him. Anger is for you, therefore fear; love and friendſhip is for the juſt, let him therefore rejoice. Would you have this made out to you? conſider what David ſays: *The eyes of the Lord are upon the juſt, and his ears are open to their prayers. But his face is towards thoſe that do evil, to blot the memory of them out of the earth,* Pſ. xxxiii. 16, 17. And in the book of Eſdras you will find theſe words: *The hand of God,* (that is, his fatherly Providence) *is over all thoſe that ſeek him, as they ſhould do; but his power and ſtrength, and fury, is againſt all thoſe that forſake him,* Eſdr. viii. 22.

25. If

25. If all we have ſaid here be true, how can you go on thus deceiving yourſelf, unhappy wretch, who continue ſtill in your ſins? How can you ſtand thus idly with your arms acroſs? Why do you change and confound the order of things? Thoſe words are not directed to you. It is not to you that the ſweetneſs of the Divine love and friendſhip is promiſed, whilſt you continue thus in the ſtate of anger and enmity. This belongs to Jacob, not to Eſau. This inheritance is for the good; what pretence therefore can you who are wicked have to it? Ceaſe to be ſo, and it is yours. Ceaſe to be ſo, and God will direct his love and his paternal Providence to you. But hitherto you have only uſurped what is another man's right, and deſired to enter into the poſſeſſion of what you have nothing to do with. *Hope in God*, ſays David, *and do that which is good*, Pſ. xxxvi. 3. And in another Pſalm, *Sacrifice a ſacrifice of juſtice, and hope in the Lord*, Pſ. iv. 6. This is the right way of hoping, and not to continue in your ſin, and think of gaining Heaven by jeſting with God Almighty's mercy. The true hope is to forſake your ſins, and to have recourſe to God. But if you remain obſtinately in them, it is then no longer hope, but preſumption. This is not to hope, and by hoping to deſerve mercy; it is rather offending mercy, to become unworthy of ever obtaining it. For as being a member of the church is no advantage to him, who, relying upon her, takes no notice of her precepts, but lives wickedly, ſo it is but juſt that he ſhould reap no benefit of God's mercy who lays hold of it to do evil.

26. This ought to be duly conſidered by the miniſters of the word of God, who, very often not regarding to whom their diſcourſe is directed, give wicked men encouragement to continue in their ſins. They ought to conſider, that as the more you let a ſick man eat the more hurt you do him, ſo the more you encourage and exhort thoſe perſons that are obſtinate in their ſins to this kind of confidence, the more you encourage them to continue in their evil courſes.

27. I will end this diſcourſe with an excellent ſentence out of St. Auguſtine, who ſays, "That men go to hell by hope as well as by deſpair; by hoping ill whilſt they lived, and by deſpairing worſe at their death." Serm. 147. De verb. dom. I adviſe you therefore, O ſinner, whoſoever you are, to lay aſide this preſumptuous confidence, and to remember that God has his juſtice as well as his mercy; ſo that as you conſider his mercy, to encourage your hope, you are likewiſe to reflect

ſiect upon his juſtice, for the exciting of your fear. For as St. Bernard ſays, " God has two feet, the one of mercy, and the other of juſtice, and nobody ought to embrace either of them without taking hold of the other; that ſo juſtice alone without mercy may not fright us into deſpair, nor mercy without juſtice flatter us into preſumption." Serm. 80. in Cantic.

CHAP. IV.

Againſt thoſe Perſons who excuſe themſelves from following Virtue, by ſaying the Way to it is rough and uneaſy.

1. THERE is another excuſe worldly men make uſe of for not following of virtue, which is, that ſhe is difficult and uneaſy, though they know this does not proceed from virtue itſelf, becauſe, being a friend to reaſon, ſhe is ſuitable to the nature of a rational creature, but from the evil inclination of our fleſh and appetite, derived from ſin. This it was that made the Apoſtle ſay, *The fleſh covets in oppoſition to the ſpirit, and the ſpirit in oppoſition to the fleſh; for theſe two reſiſt one another*, Galat. v. 17. And in another place he ſays, *I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I ſee another law in my members, that reſiſts the law of my ſpirit, and captivates me to the law of ſin*, Rom. vii. 22, 23. The Apoſtle by theſe words gives us to underſtand that virtue and the law of God agree well with and are conformable to the ſuperior part of our ſoul, which is all ſpiritual, as being the place where the underſtanding and the will reſide; but we are hindered from obſerving this law by the law of our members, that is, by the evil inclination and corruption of our appetite, with all its paſſions, which rebelled againſt the ſuperior part of the ſoul at the ſame time that rebelled againſt God, which rebellion is the cauſe of all this difficulty. Therefore it is that ſo many perſons reject virtue, though they have a great eſteem for it, like ſick men who, though, they deſire to recover their health, yet hate the medicines becauſe they are unpleaſant. If we could diſabuſe men of this miſtake it would be a great work; for it is this that chiefly drives them from virtue, in which every thing elſe is to be eſteemed and valued.

SECTION

SECTION I.

That the Grace, which is given us through Jeſus Chriſt, makes the way of Virtue ſmooth and eaſy.

2. You muſt underſtand that the chief cauſe of this miſtake is, mens conſidering nothing but the difficulty that is in virtue, without ſo much as ever reflecting upon the aſſiſtance God gives us for the overcoming of it. It was ſuch an error as this the Prophet Eliſeus's ſervant was in. For ſeeing his maſter's houſe beſet with the Syrian army, but not perceiving the forces which God had prepared to ſuccour the Prophet, he was quite diſmayed till ſuch time as God, at the Prophet's interceſſion, opened his eyes, and let him ſee there were more forces on his ſide than on the enemies. Thoſe we hear treat of are deceived after the ſame manner; for finding in themſelves the difficulty there is in virtue, without having had any proof of the favours and aſſiſtance they may receive from God, in order to acquire the ſame, they look upon the enterprize as very hard, and therefore lay it quite aſide.

3. But if the way of virtue be ſo difficult, what can the Prophet mean when he ſays, *I have taken as much delight in the way of thy commandments as in all riches*, Pſ. cxviii. 14. And in another place: *Thy commandments, O Lord, are more deſirable than gold and precious ſtones, and ſweeter than honey and the honey-comb*, Pſ. xviii. 11. So that he not only allows virtue, what we all of us grant it, that is, its extraordinary worth and excellence, but that which almoſt all the world denies it, that is, pleaſure and ſweetneſs; whence you may conclude, that thoſe who repreſent this as a heavy load, though they be Chriſtians and live under the law of grace, have not ſo much as taſted of this myſtery. Unhappy creature that you are, who talk ſo much of being a Chriſtian! For what did Chriſt come into the world? What was the end of his ſhedding his blood? What did he deſign by inſtituting of the ſacraments? Why did he ſend down the Holy Ghoſt? What ſignifies the goſpel? What ſignifies the word grace? What means the name JESUS? What can this moſt holy name of that ſame Lord whom you adore ſignify? If you are ignorant of this aſk the Evangeliſt, who ſays, *You ſhall call his name* JESUS; *for he ſhall deliver his people from their ſins*, Matth. i. 21. What is it then to deliver us from our ſins, but to deſerve pardon for us for paſt ſins and to obtain grace for us, whereby we may be able to avoid ſin for the future. What therefore was the end of our Saviour's

Saviour's coming into the world, but to help us in the work of our ſalvation? For what reaſon did he die upon the croſs, but that he might thereby deſtroy ſin? Why did he riſe again afterwards from the dead, but only to make you riſe again to this new kind of life? What did he pour out his blood for, but to make a medicine of the ſame, for the healing of your wounds? Why did he ordain the ſacraments? It was for a remedy and aſſiſtance againſt your ſins. What is one of the chief advantages of his paſſion and of his coming, but the making that way, which before was rough and difficult, ſmooth and eaſy for us? Iſaiah told us as much, when he ſaid, *That at the coming of the Meſſias the crooked ways ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rugged way ſhall be made even*, Iſai. xl. 4. For what reaſon, in fine, did he ſend down the Holy Ghoſt, but to change you from fleſh into ſpirit; and why did he come in the form of fire, but to kindle, enlighten, and enliven you, to transform you into himſelf, and make you mount up towards Heaven from this earth of ours? What is the uſe of grace, with the infuſed virtues which proceed from it, but to make the yoke of Chriſt ſweet and delightful, to make the practice of virtue eaſy, to make you merry in your afflictions, to make you hope in your dangers, and to give you a victory over all your temptations? This is the whole deſign of the goſpel, viz. that as an earthly and ſinful man, to wit, Adam, made us earthly and ſinners, ſo another man that was heavenly and juſt, to wit, Chriſt Jeſus, has made us become ſo too. What elſe do the Evangeliſts treat of? what elſe have the Prophets promiſed us? what elſe have the Apoſtles preached to us? This is the ſum of all Chriſtian divinity; this is the word which God ſpake upon earth: this is the accompliſhment and abridgment which the Prophet Iſaiah ſays, *he had from the mouth of God*, Iſa. xx. 2, 3. from whence ſuch vaſt treaſures, ſo many virtues, and ſo much juſtice immediately flowed into the world.

4. To make this the plainer I aſk you, what is the cauſe of that difficulty which we meet with in virtue? You will tell me, the evil inclinations of our hearts, and the fleſh that is conceived in ſin; becauſe the fleſh reſiſts the ſpirit, and the ſpirit the fleſh, as things contrary to one another, Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. Let us put the caſe that God ſays to you: Come hither, O man, I will take away this wicked heart of yours, and will give you another new heart, and with all ſtrength to mortify your evil inclinations and appetites. Should God make you that promiſe, would the way of virtue be then difficult to you? It is certain it would not. What is it leſs than this

this that God has ſo often promiſed in his holy ſcriptures? Hear what he ſays by the Prophet Ezechiel, addreſſing himſelf particularly to thoſe, who live under the law of grace: *I will give you*, ſays he, *a new heart, and I will put a new ſpirit into your bowels; and I will take away your heart of ſtone, and I will give you a heart of fleſh. That you may walk in my precepts, and obſerve my laws, and comply with them; and that you may be my people, and that I may be your God*, Ezec. xxi. 19, 20. Theſe are the words of the Prophet. What can you doubt of after ſuch a promiſe? Can you be afraid that God will not be as good as his word; or can you doubt of your being able to obſerve his law, if he ſtands to his promiſe of aſſiſting you? If you affirm the firſt, you make God a liar, which is one of the greateſt blaſphemies you can poſſibly be guilty of. If you ſay you cannot obſerve his laws, even with his aſſiſtance, you make him unable to provide for us as our neceſſities require, becauſe having intended to cure man, he has applied ſuch a remedy as was not fit to do it.

5. Beſides all this, God will give you power to mortify theſe evil inclinations which riſe up againſt you, and make this way ſo hard. This is one of the chief effects of the tree of life, which our Saviour has ſanctified by his blood, according to the Apoſtle's confeſſion, when he ſays, *Our old man has been crucified with Jeſus Chriſt, that the body of ſin may be deſtroyed, and that we may be ſlaves to ſin no longer*, Rom. vi. 6. The Apoſtle calls here *the old man and the body of ſin*, our ſenſual appetite, with all the vicious inclinations that proceed from it. He ſays that he was crucified upon the croſs with Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe our Saviour has by this moſt auguſt ſacrifice obtained for us ſuch grace and ſtrength as may enable us to overcome this tyrant, and free ourſelves from the oppreſſion of our own evil inclinations and from the ſlavery of ſin, as we have ſaid elſewhere. This is the victory and the extraordinary favour which the ſame Lord promiſed us by Iſaiah, ſaying, *Fear not, becauſe I am with you; retire not from me, becauſe I am your God. I will ſtrengthen and aſſiſt you, and the right hand of my juſt one*, (which is the Son of God himſelf) *ſhall ſupport you. Behold they ſhall be all confounded and put to ſhame that fight againſt you; they that contend with you ſhall be as nothing, and ſhall periſh. You ſhall ſeek after thoſe who have rebelled againſt you, and you ſhall not find them; they ſhall be as if they never had been. And thoſe that are at war with you ſhall be conſumed. Becauſe I am the Lord your God, I will take you by the hand, and will ſay to you, fear not, I will ſtand by you*, Iſa. xli. 10, 11, 12, 13. Theſe

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are God's words by the Prophet Iſaiah. Will any man therefore be diſcouraged when he is ſo ſtrong? Will any man now ſink under the fear of his own vicious inclinations, when grace gets ſuch a glorious victory over them?

SECTION II.

Some Objections anſwered.

6. You will tell me perhaps that, after all this, the juſt are never without their private failings, *which are the wrinkles that* (as Job ſays) *accuſe and bear witneſs againſt them*, Job xvi. 9. The ſame Prophet, whoſe authority we have juſt cited, anſwers this in ſhort, ſaying, *that they ſhall be as if they never had been*, Iſa. xli. 12. Becauſe if they remain, it is only to keep us in continual exerciſe, and to prove us, not to hinder or to ſhock us; they remain to excite and rouſe us, not to lord it over us; they remain to give us perpetual occaſions of merit, not to draw us into the ſnares of ſin; they remain for us to triumph over them, not that they may overcome us; they remain, in fine, for thoſe ends that are moſt proper and convenient for our trial, for our humiliation, for the knowledge of our own weakneſs, for God's glory and the honour of his grace, ſo that their continuing thus turns to our intereſt. For as wild beaſts, let them be ever ſo fierce, and of their nature ſo great enemies to man, when once they have been tamed are ſerviceable to him; ſo our paſſions, after having been moderated and ſubdued, aſſiſt us very much in our improvement in virtue.

7. Tell me now, if God ſupport, who will be able to overturn you? *If God is for you, who will be againſt you?* Rom. viii. 31. *The Lord* (ſays David) *is my light, and my ſalvation, whom ſhall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life, whom ſhall I be afraid of? Should my enemies encamp themſelves againſt me, my heart ſhall not dread. If an army ſhould riſe up againſt me, I will place my hopes in him*, Pſ. xxvi. 13. You muſt needs be a great coward if ſuch promiſes do not encourage you to ſerve God; if you will not rely upon thoſe words, it is a ſign you are very faithleſs. It is God that ſays, he will give you a new being; *that he will change your heart of ſtone, and give you another of fleſh for it*, Ezec. xi. 19. that he will mortify your paſſions, and bring you to ſuch a paſs that you ſhall not know yourſelf; that you ſhall look for your evil inclinations and ſhall not find them, becauſe he will weaken all their forces. What can you deſire more? What do you want but a lively faith and hope, that you may place all your confidence in God, and caſt yourſelf entirely into his arms?

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8. All the objection I imagine you can make to this is, that your ſins are very great, and therefore it is likely they will be the occaſion of God's refuſing you this grace. To which I anſwer, that this is one of the greateſt affronts you can offer to God; becauſe, by this, you perſuade yourſelf either that God cannot or will not aſſiſt his creatures, when they return to him and beg his help. I do not deſire you ſhould believe me in this particular, do but believe the holy Prophet, who ſeems to have thought upon you, and, as it were, to have prevented you, when he wrote theſe words: *If*, ſays he, *all the curſes which I have reckoned up ſhould light upon you for your ſins, and you ſhould afterwards be touched with a ſorrow for them, and ſhould return to him with your whole heart and with all your ſoul, the Lord your God will bring you out of your captivity, and will have compaſſion on you; and though you ſhould be carried away to the fartheſt parts of the world, he will bring you back again, and will lead you into the land which your fathers poſſeſſed, and you ſhall inherit the ſame.* He adds farther, *The Lord your God will circumciſe your hearts and the hearts of your poſterity, to the end that you may love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your ſoul*, Deut. xxx. 1, 6. O that this Lord would at preſent circumciſe your eyes, and remove the miſt that is before them, that you might ſee plainly what kind of a circumciſion this is! You cannot be ſo dull as to take it for a corporal circumciſion, becauſe the heart is not capable of it; what ſort of circumciſion is it then that the Lord promiſes in this place? It is without doubt the retrenching of that ſuperfluity of paſſions and evil inclinations which flows from the heart, and which hinders it from placing its love where it ought. Theſe are the ſuperfluous and hurtful branches which he promiſes to lop off with the knife of his grace, that the heart, being thus pruned and circumciſed, may ſhoot forth all its virtue by this only branch of the love of God, John i. 47. Then it is that you will be an Iſraelite indeed; it is then you will be truly circumciſed, when he ſhall ſee the love of the world cut off from your ſoul, and no other love remaining in it but the love of him.

9. I could wiſh you would conſider with attention how God, in another place, commands you to do that yourſelf which he promiſes here he will do for you, if you will but return to him. His words are theſe: *Circumciſe yourſelves to the Lord, and take away the foreſkins of your hearts*, Jerem. iv. 4. Why, O Lord, do you command me to do what you yourſelf promiſe to do for me? If you muſt do it, why do you command me to do it? If I muſt do it, why do you promiſe that you

you will? The glorious St. Auguſtine clears this difficulty by theſe words: "Give me grace, (ſays he) O Lord, to do whatever you command me, and command me to do whatever you pleaſe." Conf. L. 10. c. 31. So that it is he commands me all that I am obliged to do, and aſſiſts me with his grace to do it. Thus the command and the promiſe meet here both together, and God and man produce the ſame effect; God as the principal cauſe, and man as the leſs principal. Thus it is that God deals with men as a painter that ſhould guide the pencil in his ſcholar's hand, and he, by this means, come to draw a fine piece, that they both made it is clear; but it would not therefore follow that they both deſerved the ſame honour, or that one had as good a hand as the other. It is juſt ſo God does in our preſent caſe, and that without prejudice to the liberty of freewill, that man may have nothing to take a pride in when the work is done, but may give all the glory of it to the Lord, and ſay with the Prophet, *Thou, O Lord, haſt wrought in us all the works that we have done*, Iſa. xxvi. 12.

10. Reflect therefore upon this ſentence, and by the means of it you will come to have a perfect underſtanding of the commandments of God, becauſe he promiſes to be with you in doing of all he commands you. And thus, as he ſays, when he bids you circumciſe your heart, that he will circumciſe it for you, ſo when he bids you love him above all things, he will give you grace to do it. This is the reaſon why it is ſaid, that *God's yoke is ſweet*, Matth. xi. 30. becauſe there are two to carry it, that is, God and man; ſo that by this means God's grace makes that eaſy which nature by itſelf made very difficult. And therefore Moſes, immediately after the words above-cited, goes on thus: *The command which I lay upon you this day is not above you, nor at any great diſtance from you, nor is it placed in Heaven, that you ſhould ſay, Is there any one of us that can go to Heaven, and bring it from thence to us, that we may obey it and comply with it? Neither is it placed beyond the ſea, that you ſhould have any reaſon to ſay, Who is there amongſt us that can go over the ſea and bring it away to us, that we may obey and do all that is commanded? On the contrary, it is juſt by you, in your mouth and in your heart, to the end that you may obſerve it*, Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14. By which words the holy Prophet deſigned to remove thoſe difficulties and impediments, which ſenſual men find in the law of God, becauſe conſidering the law barely without the goſpel, that is to ſay, looking on what is commanded without regarding the grace which is given to enable them to perform it, they reflect upon the law of God

as hard and unpleaſant, without conſidering they flatly contradict St. John in this point, who ſays, *True charity conſiſts in our keeping of God's commandments, and his commandments are not burthenſome; becauſe all that is born of God overcomes the world*, John v. 3, 4. meaning that thoſe who have received the ſpirit of God in their ſouls, by the means of which they have been regenerated, and made the children of him whoſe ſpirit they have received, have God within them, who dwells in them by grace, and enables them to do much more than all the world could beſides; ſo that neither the world nor the devil, nor all the power of hell can prevail againſt them. Whence follows that, though God's commandments were very heavy, the new force furniſhed by grace would make them light.

SECTION III.

That the Love of God makes the Way to Heaven eaſy and pleaſant.

11. If, to all that has been ſaid, we add the aſſiſtance we receive from charity, how light and eaſy will virtue be then? For it is evident that one of the chief qualities of charity is to make the yoke of God's laws very delightful; becauſe as St. Auguſtine ſays, "Thoſe who love think no labours painful, nay, they delight in them as men that love fiſhing, hunting or hawking, do in the toils and fatigues of thoſe ſports." St. Aug. Trac. 48. in Joan. What is it that makes a mother not regard the pains ſhe takes in bringing up her children, but love? What is it, but love, that makes a virtuous wife tend her ſick huſband day and night, without any intermiſſion? What is it that makes even beaſts and birds take ſo much pains for the nouriſhing of their young ones, ſo as almoſt to ſtarve themſelves to feed them, to labour hard that they may take their reſt, and to expoſe themſelves to danger, with a great deal of courage, to defend and ſecure them? It is nothing elſe but love. What elſe was it that made the Apoſtle St. Paul ſpeak theſe generous words, which we read in his Epiſtle to the Romans, *Who will ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Will tribulation, or trouble, or hunger, or nakedneſs, or danger, or perſecution, or the ſword? I am ſure that neither death, nor life, nor the angels, nor the principalities, nor the virtues, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor ſtrength, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from*

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the love of God, Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39. What was it elſe, but the force of this love that made our holy father St. Dominic thirſt ſo ardently after martyrdom? What was it that made St. Laurence ſo cheerful, whilſt he was broiling upon the gridiron, as to cry out, that theſe very flames refreſhed him, but the exceſſive deſire he had of martyrdom kindled in him by this love. "For the true love of God, (as St. Chryſologus ſays) thinks nothing hard, nothing bitter, nothing heavy. What iron, what wounds, what pains, what death is there which true love cannot overcome? Love is armour of proof, it turns the arrows, repels the darts, deſpiſes dangers, and laughs at death. In fine, love carries all before it." St. Chryſologus's Serm. 147. de Incarnat.

12. Nor is perfect love ſatisfied with overcoming ſuch labours and difficulties as occur, but deſires to meet with more for his ſake that is beloved. Hence proceeds that eager thirſting of perfect men after martyrdom! that is, to ſhed their blood for him who firſt ſhed his for them. And becauſe they cannot obtain their deſires, they are enraged againſt themſelves, and become their own executioners. Therefore they martyr their bodies, and torment them with hunger, thirſt, cold, heat, and with many other mortifications, and thus they find a great deal of comfort in their ſufferings, becauſe they in ſome meaſure obtain what they deſired.

13. This language thoſe that love the world do not underſtand, nor can they conceive how any man can love what they ſo much abhor, or have a horror for that they ſo paſſionately love. We read in the holy ſcriptures, that the Egyptians had brute beaſts for their gods, and as ſuch adored and worſhipped them, but the children of Iſrael called thoſe things abominations which the Egyptians called gods, and ſacrificed ſuch creatures as they adored for gods, in honour of the true God. Exod. viii. 26, 27. The juſt in the ſame manner, like true Iſraelites, call thoſe abominations which the world worſhips as its gods, ſuch are honours, pleaſures, and riches, which it adores and offers ſacrifice to; they deſpiſe and make a ſacrifice of thoſe falſe gods, as of ſo many abominations to the glory of the true God. So let him that would offer an acceptable ſacrifice to God obſerve what the world adores, and offer that; on the contrary, let him embrace for the love of God whatſoever he ſees the world deteſt and abhor. Did not they do ſo who, after receiving the firſt fruits of the Holy Ghoſt, were glad to have been carried before the counſel, and to have ſuffered injuries for the name of Chriſt? Acts v. Is

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it poſſible then that what made priſons, ſcourges, gridirons and flames delightful, ſhall not be able to make the keeping of God's commandments ſweet and pleaſant to you? Can that which is every day powerful enough to make the juſt bear, not only the burden of the law but the additional weight of their faſts, their watchings, their diſciplines, their hair-ſhirts, their nakedneſs, and their poverty, want force to make you carry the bare burden of the law of God and of his church? Alas! how much you are deluded? Alas! how ignorant you are of the force of charity and of the grace of God?

SECTION IV.

Of ſome other Things which make the Way of Virtue pleaſant to us.

14. What has been ſaid might ſuffice to remove this objection ſo many make uſe of. But ſuppoſing there were nothing of what we have urged, ſuppoſing there were many hardſhips in this road, what wonder were it you ſhould, for the ſalvation of your ſoul, do ſome part of what you do for the health of your body; what mighty matter would it be to do ſomething to eſcape eternal torments? What do you think the covetous rich man, who is now burning in hell-fire, would not do if he were to have the liberty of returning to the world, to do penance for his paſt ſins? There is no reaſon but you ſhould do as much now as he would do, were it in his power; becauſe if you are wicked, the ſame torment is prepared for you, and therefore you ought to have the ſame deſire.

15. Beſides, if you did ſeriouſly conſider how much God has done for you, and how much more he promiſes you, if you did reflect upon thoſe many crimes you have committed againſt him, upon the toils and hardſhips which the ſaints have undergone, but particularly upon thoſe which the Saint of Saints has endured for your ſake, you could not but be aſhamed and bluſh, not to ſuffer ſomething for the love of God, nay, you would even be afraid and jealous of every thing that pleaſed you.

This it was that made St. Bernard ſay, "That all the tribulations and torments we can poſſibly ſuffer in this life, bear no proportion with either the glory we hope for, or the torments we fear, or the ſins we have committed, or the benefits God has beſtowed on us." Any one of theſe conſiderations ought

ought to ſuffice to make us undertake this life, though ever ſo laborious and troubleſome.

16. But to deal ingenuouſly with you, though there be troubles and difficulties in all places, and in all ſorts of lives, yet the hardſhips that occur in the way of the wicked are incomparably more than in the way of the juſt. For though it is troubleſome to go a long journey a-foot, pick your way out as well as you can, becauſe you will be tired before you get to your journey's end; yet it is certain that a blind man, who ſtumbles every ſtep he takes, will find it much more troubleſome than he that walks with his eyes open, and minds where he treads. Since therefore this life of ours is but a journey, it is impoſſible to avoid all thoſe troubles that are in it, till we arrive at our reſting place. But the wicked man, not guiding himſelf by the rules of reaſon, but according to the impulſe and bent of his paſſions, it is a plain caſe that he walks on as if he were blind, ſince there is nothing in nature ſo blind as paſſion. On the contrary, the good and virtuous man, following in all things the dictates of reaſon, diſcovers theſe precipices at a diſtance, and avoids the ſame, continuing on his journey, by this means, with leſs trouble and much more ſecurity. Solomon the Wiſe was ſenſible of this, and acknowledges it to be ſo, when he ſays, *The path of the juſt, like a bright light, goes on and encreaſes till it come to full-day. But the way of the wicked is dark; ſo that they do not know where the precipices are that they may fall down*, Prov. iv. 18, 19. It is not only *dark*, as Solomon ſays, but *ſlippery* too, according to David, Pſal. xxxiv. 6. ſo that by this you may ſee, how often that man muſt of neceſſity fall who walks in ſuch a way as this is, in the dark, and himſelf quite blind; and by theſe compariſons you may perceive what vaſt difference there is betwixt the two ways of the wicked and the juſt, and betwixt the difficulties both parties meet with.

17. And what is yet more, the juſt have a thouſand helps that leſſen and eaſe this little trouble they are at, as has been obſerved before. For, firſt, they have the aſſiſtance of God's fatherly Providence, which directs and guides them; they have the grace of the Holy Ghoſt, that ſtrengthens and encourages them; they have the virtue of the ſacraments, which ſanctifies them; they have the Divine conſolations, which refreſh them; they have the examples of good men to excite them; they have the writings of the ſaints to inſtruct them; they have the joy of a good conſcience to comfort them; they have the hope of everlaſting glory to nouriſh them; with a thouſand

thouſand other favours and aſſiſtances which God Almighty gives them, by the means of which this way becomes ſo pleaſant to them that they come at laſt to cry out with the Prophet, *How ſweet are thy words, O Lord, to my mouth; they are ſweeter than honey.*

18. Whoſoever will but reflect upon this, will immediately ſee how ſeveral paſſages of the holy ſcriptures, ſome of which make the way of virtue rough and troubleſome, and others again ſmooth and eaſy, are to be reconciled together. For the royal Prophet ſays in one place, *For the love of the words of thy lips I have walked through hard ways.* Pſ. xvi. 4. And in another, *I have been delighted in the way of thy teſtimonies, as in all riches.* Pſ. cxviii. 14. For it is true to ſay that both theſe things, to wit, difficulty and eaſe, are in this way; the firſt comes from nature, and the other from the virtue of grace; and thus, what was difficult on account of the one, becomes eaſy by means of the other. Our Saviour himſelf ſignified as much to us, by theſe words: *My yoke is ſweet and my burden is light;* Matth. xi. 30. For by giving it the name of a *yoke*, he expreſſed the heavy weight, and by calling it *ſweet*, he ſhewed us with how much eaſe we might carry it by the help of grace.

19. But if you ſhould aſk me, how it is poſſible this can be a yoke, and at the ſame time ſweet too, it being the nature of a yoke to be heavy: I anſwer, it is becauſe God makes it light, according to his promiſe by the Prophet Oſee: *I will be to them as one that ſupports their burden; and that takes it from their ſhoulders.* Oſee. xi. 5. What wonder is it then that this yoke ſhould be eaſy when God makes it ſo, and when he himſelf helps us to carry it? If the buſh was a fire without being burnt, becauſe God was in it, why ſhould we be aſtoniſhed at a burden's being light, when God himſelf is under it? Exod. iii. 2. Would you ſee them both in the ſame perſon? Hear what St. Paul ſays: *We ſuffer tribulation in all things, and are not troubled; we are in diſtreſs, but not deſpair; we ſuffer perſecution, but are not forſaken; we are caſt down, but are not confounded.* 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. Conſider here, on the one ſide, the weight of theſe labours, and on the other, how light God uſed to make them.

20. Iſaiah ſignified this more expreſly to us, when he ſaid, *They that hope in the Lord ſhall change their ſtrength, they ſhall take wings like eagles, they ſhall run and ſhall take no pains, they ſhall walk and ſhall not faint.* Iſa. xl. 31. You ſee here the yoke flung off by the virtue of grace; you ſee the ſtrength

of the flesh changed into that of the spirit, or rather the strength of man turned into that of God; you see the holy Prophet did not pass over in silence either the labour, the rest, or the advantage which one has over the other, when he said, *They shall run and shall take no pains, they shall walk and shall not faint.* So that you ought not to go out of this road, because it is rugged and troublesome, since there are so many things in it which make it smooth and easy.

SECTION V.

Some Examples to prove what has been said.

21. If all these reasons cannot convince you, and your incredulity remains, like that of St. Thomas, who would not believe any thing but what he saw with his own eyes, I will comply with you in this point too, not fearing that such a good cause as this is can want a defence. Let us for example take a man that has run through all the courses of this life, that has been for some time very vicious and worldly, and has afterwards, through the pure mercy of God, changed these evil practices, and become quite another thing; such a man as this is a proper judge, because he has not only heard but seen and had the experience of both these conditions. You may desire this man to tell you, whether of these two he found to be the sweetest? Several of those whose business it is to examine into the consciences of others will give you good testimonies of this truth, *because they are the men who descend in ships into the sea, and see the wonderful works of the Lord in the deep.* Ps. cvi. 23, 24. which are nothing else but the effects of his grace, and these extraordinary changes which are wrought every day by virtue thereof, and which are without doubt subjects of a more than common wonder. For it is certain there is nothing in the world which better deserves our admiration, if a man would but consider it well, than to see the effects which grace produces in the soul of a just man, to see how it transforms him, how it bears him up, how it strengthens him, how it comforts him, how it composes him all over, both within and without, how it makes him change the customs of the old man, how it alters all his affections and pleasures, how it makes him love that which he hated before, and hate that which he had before a love for, how it makes him relish that which before he looked upon as unsavory, whilst at the same time he loathes that which he sought so much after before. Who can conceive

ceive what ſtrength it gives him for fighting, what joy, what peace, what light for the knowing of the will of God, the vanity of the world, and the true value of ſpiritual things which he uſed to deſpiſe? But what is yet more wonderful than all the reſt is, to ſee in how ſhort a time all theſe things are performed; for there is no neceſſity of ſpending ſeveral years in the ſchools of the philoſophers, nor of ſtaying till we are old men, that age may help us to recover our ſenſes and the mortifying our paſſions; a man may be changed in the very heat and vigour of his youth, and in the ſpace of a very few days, ſo as to be ſcarce able to know himſelf. Therefore it was St. Cyprian ſaid, "That this is a thing which may ſooner be felt than learned; and that it is not to be gained by many years ſtudy, but by a turn of grace, which produces it all in a very little time." St. Cypr. Ep. ad Donat. We may therefore call grace a kind of ſpiritual charm, by which God changes mens hearts, to make them have a paſſionate love for thoſe things which before they had a horror of, as for example, the practice of the ſeveral virtues, and the greateſt averſion imaginable to thoſe things they deſired ſo eagerly before, to wit, the delights and pleaſures that are in ſin.

22. This is one of the moſt conſiderable advantages thoſe confeſſors gain by their employ, who diſcharge it with a right ſpirit and devotion, for they daily ſee ſeveral of theſe miracles, by which God ſeems to requite the trouble they undergo in doing him that piece of ſervice. And this return which God makes them is ſo generous, that we have ſeen ſeveral confeſſors changed themſelves by ſeeing ſuch changes in others; and theſe frequent examples have been the occaſions of their advancing in the way of virtue. So that theſe perſons, whilſt they are ſilent like another Jacob, hear Joſeph's myſterious words, and value the ſame at their juſt rate, whilſt the ſimple infant that relates does not know what price to ſet upon them.

23. But for the greater confirmation of what I have ſaid, I will here add the examples of two great Saints, who lived in this ſame error for ſome time, but afterward diſcovered the deceit. God has thought fit that they ſhould both of them leave us in writing an account of the ſame, for our inſtruction and example. The glorious martyr St. Cyprian, writing to his dear friend Donatus, to acquaint him with the beginning and manner of his converſion, delivers himſelf thus:

24. "During the time in which I walked in darkneſs and in an obſcure night, when I was toſſed up and down, like one in a ſtorm, by the inconſtant waves of this world, and was ſunk very deep into the mire, knowing nothing at all of my own courſe of life, and deprived of the light of truth, I looked upon all that as very hard to be effected which God had promiſed me, in order to my ſalvation, which is, *that a man could be born again, and by the virtue of baptiſm receive a new life, ſo as to be changed from what he was before, and be made a new man within, though the ſubſtance without remained ſtill the ſame.* John iii. 5. How, ſaid I, is it poſſible that ſuch a converſion ſhould happen, as that we ſhould immediately and on a ſudden ſhake off that which has been a long time rooted in us, either by the corruption of our nature or by a long uſe and cuſtom? How can he live ſparingly who has been uſed to keep a great table? When will he wear a plain dreſs who has been always cloathed in ſilks and ſcarlet? He that has always carried a great retinue with him, and has been attended by a train of lackeys, will never endure to go by himſelf. He that has placed all his delight in great employments can never live like a private man. He cannot but be always wrought upon by thoſe things he uſed to be charmed with; intemperance will ſolicit him, pride will puff him up, anger will inflame him, covetouſneſs torment him, cruelty preſs him, ambition pleaſe him, and luſt hurry him blindly away. I frequently reflected upon theſe things with myſelf, for being engaged in ſo many different ſins of my paſt life, which I thought I ſhould never be freed from, I myſelf encouraged the vices which ſtuck faſt to me, and deſpairing of ever growing better, I favoured my crimes as if they had been of my own houſe and family. But as ſoon as the ſtains and filth of my former life was waſhed off by the water of baptiſm, a heavenly light ſhone down upon my ſoul, now cleaned and purged from all its ſins. As ſoon as I had received the Holy Ghoſt, I was by the means of a ſecond birth ſo changed into a new man, that what I before doubted of I immediately looked upon as moſt certain, what was ſhut up againſt me before was immediately opened, that which was dark became light; I thought thoſe things eaſy which before ſeemed to be ſo hard, and what uſed to ſeem impoſſible I looked upon as quite contrary; I ſaw clearly that what was born of the fleſh and liable to frequent failings, was earthly, and that what the Holy Ghoſt had animated, came from God, and not from man. You know very well, my dear Donatus,

tus, what this holy ſpirit has taken from me, and what he has beſtowed on me; he who is the death of ſin and the life of all kinds of virtues. You know all this, nor do I boaſt of any thing now; it is odious to boaſt of ſuch things for to get praiſe and commendation; though, for a man to talk of what he has received from the pure mercy of God, and what he cannot by any means aſcribe to himſelf, is ſo far from boaſting, that, on the contrary, it is but juſtice and gratitude; for it is plain that the forſaking of ſin, is no leſs the effect of divine grace, than the committing of it is the effect of human frailty." S. Cypr. Ep. 2. L. 2.

25. Theſe are the words of St. Cyprian, which plainly diſcover the miſtake you and many more are under, who, meaſuring the difficulty of virtue by their own ſtrength, look upon the acquiring of it as not only difficult but impoſſible, and never ſo much as conſider that if they will but caſt themſelves into the arms of God, and reſolve fully to forſake their ſins, he will receive them into his grace, which makes this way ſo ſmooth, as appears by this example. For it is certain there is no falſehood in all this, nor will that grace be denied you which was granted to this Saint, if you will return to God as ſincerely as he did.

26. Hear another example, no leſs wonderful than the former. St. Auguſtine, in the eight book of his Confeſſions, tells us, that he had no ſooner begun to think ſeriouſly with himſelf of leaving the world, but a great many difficulties offered themſelves to him in this change, whilſt at the ſame time he thought, on the one ſide, that all his former pleaſures came and ſtood before him, and ſaid to him "What, will you part with us, and ſhall we from this moment never ſee you again for all eternity?" Conf. L. 8. c. 11. On the other ſide he ſays, that virtue appeared to him with a ſerene and cheerful countenance, accompanied with a great many good examples of virgins and widows, and of other perſons who had lived chaſtely in all kinds of ſtates and ages, and that they ſaid to him, "Cannot you do as much as theſe men and women have done? Have they done any thing of themſelves? Is it not God that has done all in them? Whilſt you rely upon yourſelf you muſt of neceſſity fall. Caſt yourſelf upon him, be not afraid, he will not go away from you, and let you fall; caſt yourſelf upon him with confidence, he will receive and cure you." Ibid.

27. This great Saint ſays, that as he was in the heat of this combat he began to weep bitterly, and going a little aſide, laid

laid himself down under a fig-tree, and there giving way to his tears cried out from the bottom of his heart, saying: "And thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord, wilt thou be angry at me? Be not mindful of our past iniquities. How long, O Lord, how long will this to-morrow, to-morrow last? Why not now? Why shall there not be an end of my disorders this very hour?" Ibid. c. 12. Ps. lxiv. Ps. xii. 1. Ps. lxxviii. 8. Isa. lxiv. 9.

28. As soon as the Saint had made an end of these and such complaints, he says, his heart was so changed on a sudden, that from that very moment he never had any farther affection for the sins of the flesh, nor for the delights and pleasures of the world. On the contrary, he perceived his heart entirely freed from all its former irregular desires. And having recovered his liberty he begins, in his following book, to thank his deliverer, saying, "O Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bones asunder, I will offer up to thee a sacrifice of praise. *Let my heart and my tongue praise thee, and let all my bones say, who is like unto thee, O Lord?* Ps. lxxxiv. 2. Where has my free-will been for so many years, O Jesus Christ, my helper and my redeemer, since it has not returned to thee? From what deep abyss hast thou drawn it in a moment, that I might put my neck under thy easy yoke, and my shoulders under thy light burden? How am I on a sudden delighted with being deprived of the trifling pleasures I have so long run after, and what a satisfaction is it to me to part with those follies I was afraid of losing before? Thou, O solid and chief delight, hast driven all those other false ones from me; thou hast driven them away, and hast taken up their places; thou art more delightful than all other delights, and more beautiful than all other beauties together." L. 9. c. 1. Ps. cxv. 16, 17. Thus far St. Augustine.

29. Tell me now, since the case stands thus, and since the power and efficacy of God's grace is so great, what is there can still enslave and keep you from doing as much as this glorious saint has done? If you believe that what I have here related is true, that it is in the power of grace to work such a change as this of St. Augustine's, and that this grace is denied to no man that shall seek after it with his whole heart, God being the same now that he was then, without any respect of persons, what hinders you from getting out of this miserable slavery, and from embracing this sovereign good which is so freely offered you? Why had you rather gain one hell by another, than one

one paradiſe by another? Be not dejected nor diſcouraged. Try, once at leaſt, whether this be true or not, and put your confidence in God, that as ſoon as ever you begin he will come and meet you, to receive you with open arms, as he did the Prodigal Son, Luke xv. It is a ſtrange thing, that if a notorious cheat ſhould promiſe to teach you the art of finding out the philoſopher's ſtone, or of turning braſs into gold, you ſhould endeavour to learn it, whatſoever it coſt you; and yet God Almighty here gives you his word, that he will teach you how you may change yourſelf from earth into heaven, from fleſh into ſpirit, from a man into an angel, and you will not ſo much as try the experiment.

30. In fine, ſince you muſt of neceſſity either ſooner or later, either in this life or in the next, acknowledge this truth, I beg of you that you would conſider ſeriouſly how you will find yourſelf deceived at the making up of your accounts, when you ſhall ſee yourſelf damned for all eternity, for leaving the path of virtue, becauſe you falſely imagined that it was uneven and difficult; you will then, but alas too late, perceive, that it was a much more pleaſant way than that of ſin, and the only road that led to everlaſting delight.

CHAP. V.

Againſt thoſe who refuſe to Walk in the Way of Virtue, becauſe they love the World.

1. IF we did examine all thoſe who refuſe to walk in the way of virtue, we ſhould perhaps find the deceitful love of this world to be one of the chief cauſes of their faint-heartedneſs. I call that love of the world deceitful, becauſe it is grounded on a falſe, imaginary and apparent good, which ſeems to be in the things of the world, and makes ignorant perſons ſet ſo great a value upon them. For as creatures that are naturally timorous always avoid ſome particular objects, imagining there is danger in them, even when they are fartheſt from them, ſo theſe men, on the contrary, love and run after the things of the world, becauſe they fancy they are pleaſant and delightful, though in reality they are not ſo. And therefore, as thoſe who would break ſuch creatures of that imperfection, and make them go cloſe by thoſe things they were afraid of, that they may ſee they were frightened at nothing

thing but a ſhadow, ſo it is requiſite now we ſhould lead theſe perſons through the mere ſhadows of worldly things they ſo paſſionately affect, that they may look on them with other eyes, and perceive how they have placed all their love upon a mere vanity, and acknowledge that theſe falſe goods no more deſerve to be beloved, than thoſe dangers we have ſpoken of deſerve to be feared.

2. If we therefore ſeriouſly reflect on the world and its happineſs, we ſhall find theſe ſix kinds of evils in it, to wit, ſhortneſs, miſery, danger, blindneſs, ſin and deceit. Theſe are the inſeparable companions of all the world's felicity, which plainly ſhew what it is. We will ſpeak here briefly of each of theſe evils, according to their order.

SECTION I.

How ſhort the Happineſs of this World is.

3. To begin with the ſhortneſs, you cannot deny but that all the happineſs of this world, though ever ſo great, is but of ſhort continuance; for man's felicity can laſt no longer than his life. Now, how long this life is we all know, ſince the longeſt ſcarce ever arrives to the hundredth year. But how few are there that ever reach to this? I have ſeen biſhops that have not lived above two months, popes that have not outlived one, and new-married couples that have died within a week after their marriage; we read of a great many ſuch examples in former times, and ſee as many at preſent every day. Put the caſe, your life may be one of the longeſt, "Let us grant (ſays St. Chryſoſtom,) that a man may have a hundred years to ſpend in the pleaſures of the world. To this let us add another hundred, nay two hundred more, if you will, what is all this in reſpect of eternity?" *If*, ſays Solomon, *a man ſhould live a great many years, and during all this time ſhould enjoy all kinds of pleaſures, he ought to remember the time of darkneſs and the days of eternity, which, when they come, all that is paſt ſhall appear to have been vanity*, Eccl. xi. 8. For all happineſs whatever, let it be ever ſo great, will appear to be but vanity, as it really is, when compared with eternity. This is what even the wicked themſelves confeſs, in the Book of Wiſdom, where they ſay, *We were no ſooner born than we immediately ceaſed to be.* Sap. v. 13. Conſider how ſhort all the time of this life will ſeem then to the wicked; they will imagine they have ſcarce lived one day, they will think they were hurried away immediately from the womb to the grave. Whence

it

it follows, that all the pleaſures of this world will then ſeem to be only imaginary, and which appeared to be pleaſures, but were not ſo. The Prophet Iſaiah has given us an excellent deſcription of this in theſe words: *As a man that is hungry dreams that he eats, but when he awakes he finds himſelf ſtill empty; and as a man that is thirſty dreams that he drinks, but after he is awake he ſtill faints with thirſt, and is as empty as he was; ſo ſhall it fare with all the nations who have waged war againſt the mountain of Sion*, Iſa. xxix. 8. Their proſperity ſhall be ſo ſhort, that as ſoon as ever they ſhall open their eyes, and this little time ſhall paſs away, they ſhall find that all their joys were nothing but mere dreams. For what other name will you give to the glory of as many princes and emperors as have ever lived in the world? *Where*, ſays the Prophet, *are the princes of the nations, and thoſe who rule over the beaſts of the earth, who ſport themſelves with the birds of the air?* Bar. iii. 16, 17. Where are thoſe who have piled up mountains of ſilver and gold, in which they place their confidence? Where are all thoſe who have taken ſo much pains in making rich veſſels of gold and ſilver, that it is almoſt impoſſible to reckon up all their different deſigns and inventions? What is become now of all theſe perſons? where is it that they live? They are now turned out of their palaces, they are thrown down into hell, and others have taken their places. What is become of the wiſe man? What is become of the ſcholar? What is become of him that uſed to ſearch into the ſecrets of nature? What is become of all Solomon's glory? Where is now the mighty Alexander and the glorious Aſſuerus? Where are all the famous Roman Cæſars? Where are all the other princes and kings of the earth? What have they got by their vain-glory, by the power they had in this world, by the great number of their attendants, by their falſe riches, by their mighty armies, by thoſe crowds of buffoons, of fawning paraſites and flatterers, which were perpetually about them? All this has been nothing but a mere ſhadow, a mere dream, a fleeting happineſs of but a moment's continuance. Conſider then how ſhort the happineſs of this world is.

SECTION II.

Of the great Miſeries worldly Delights are mixed with.

4. This happineſs, beſides its being ſo ſhort, has another evil, which is, that it is always attended by a thouſand miſeries not to be avoided in this life, or, to ſpeak plainer, in this vale of tears, in this place of baniſhment, in this tempeſtuous ſea.

ſea. For the miſeries which man perpetually lies open to are, in truth, many more than the days, nay, than even the hours of his life; becauſe every day uſhers in freſh cares and ſolicitudes, and he is every hour threatened with new miſeries, which no tongue can be able to expreſs. Who can reckon up all the infirmities of our bodies, all the paſſions of our ſouls, all the afflictions cauſed by our very friends, with all the other diſaſters of our lives? One goes to law with you for your eſtate, another endeavours to take away your life, a third robs you of your reputation and honour; ſome men purſue you with hatred, ſome with envy, ſome with fraud, ſome with deſigns of revenge, ſome with calumnies, ſome with arms, and others, in fine, wound you mortally with their tongues, more dangerous and more hurtful far than even arms are. Beſides all theſe miſeries there is an infinity of others, for which we have no names, becauſe they are unexpected accidents. One man has an eye thruſt out, another has an arm cut off, another falls down out of a window, another off his horſe, another is drowned in a river, another loſes his eſtate, another is ruined by being bound for friends. If you would know more of theſe miſeries, aſk the worldly man to give you a true account of the pleaſures and diſpleaſures he has had in his way of living. If they were both put into equal ſcales, you would ſee how much the one would outweigh the other, and how for one moment of pleaſure there are an hundred hours of trouble and diſcontent. If therefore man's whole life is ſo ſhort, and ſo great a part of it filled with ſuch miſeries, what room can there be for true happineſs?

5. But, as for theſe miſeries which I have here reckoned up, they are ſuch as happen to the good as well as to the bad; for ſince they are all aboard the ſame veſſel, and ſailing in the ſame ſea, they muſt needs be expoſed to the ſame ſtorms. There are other miſeries which are more ſenſible than theſe, and particularly belonging to the wicked, as being the effects of their ſins. The knowledge of theſe will be much more to our purpoſe, in as much as it makes the lives of ſuch men as are expoſed to them more abominable. The wicked themſelves inform us of the greatneſs of them, in the Book of Wiſdom, ſaying, *We have been tired in the way of iniquity and perdition; our ways have been hard, and we have been ignorant of the way of the Lord*, Sap. v. 7. So that, as the good have a paradiſe in even this life, and hope for another in the next, and go from one ſabaoth to another, that is, from one joy to another ſo, on the contrary, the wicked have a hell in this life, and expect another

another in the next, becauſe they go from the hell of a bad conſcience to that of everlaſting torments.

6. Theſe calamities happen to the wicked ſeveral ways. God ſends them to ſome; for he, as being a juſt judge, will not permit the evil of the crime to paſs over without the due puniſhment, which, though it be generally reſerved for the next life, yet often begins in this. For it is certain, that God's providence, as it is over the world in general, ſo is it over each perſon in particular. And therefore we ſee that, when there are more than ordinary ſins committed in the world, they are followed by more than ordinary puniſhments, as famine, wars, plagues, hereſies, and ſuch other calamities. It frequently happens too that God puniſhes man according to the ſins which he is guilty of. For this reaſon he ſaid to Cain, *If you do well, you ſhall receive the reward of it; but if you do ill, you ſhall find your ſin at your door*, Gen. iv. that is, the puniſhment which your ſin deſerves. And in Deuteronomy Moſes told the people of Iſrael, *You ſhall know that the Lord your God is a ſtrong and faithful God, keeping his word, and ſhewing his mercy to thoſe that love him and keep his commandments, even to a thouſand generations; and immediately puniſhing thoſe that hate him, ſo as that he deſtroys them, and does not defer any longer, immediately giving them what they deſerve*, Deut. vii. 9, 10. Conſider how many times in this place he repeats the word *immediately*; by which we may underſtand that, beſides the puniſhment due to the wicked in the next life, they are often puniſhed in this, ſince the ſcripture in this place ſo often repeats that they ſhall be puniſhed immediately. This is the cauſe of thoſe many calamities and torments they endure, ſtill rolling in a perpetual wheel of diſquiets, fatigues, neceſſities and hardſhips. Now, ſuppoſing that they are ſenſible of them, yet they do not know from whence they come; ſo that they look upon them rather as the neceſſary conditions of nature, than as puniſhments inflicted on them for their crimes. For as they do not reckon the common benefits of nature as the effects of God's mercy, and therefore do not thank him for them, ſo neither do they account upon the calamities he ſends them as the ſtrokes of his anger, nor are they any thing the better for them.

7. Other miſeries befall them which come from God's vicegerents, the miniſters of his juſtice, who often meet with the wicked, and puniſh them with impriſonments, baniſhments, fines, infamies, forfeiture of eſtates, and other kinds of torments, which make the pleaſure of their ſins prove bitter and dearly brought, even in this life.

8. Other

8. Other pains and miſeries are brought upon them by the inordinate appetites and paſſions of their hearts; for what can be expected from an immoderate affection, from a vain fear, from a doubtful hope, from an irregular deſire, from a ſolicitous ſorrow, but a thouſand cares and perplexities, which deprive them of the peace and liberty of heart, which make their whole life uneaſy, which excite them to ſin, which hinder them from praying, which diſturb their reſt in the night, and which make them melancholy and unhappy all the days of their life. Man himſelf, that is, the irregularity of his paſſions, is the cauſe of all theſe miſeries. You may judge by this what he has to hope for from any thing elſe, who has ſuch a harveſt of his own as this is, and with whom he can be at peace, who is ſo hotly at war with himſelf.

SECTION III.

Of the great Snares and Dangers of the World.

9. If there were none but pains and torments of the body in the world, there would not be ſo much reaſon to fear; but alas! there are dangers of the ſoul much more to be apprehended, becauſe they touch us more to the quick. Theſe dangers are ſo great, that the royal Prophet ſays, *God ſhall rain down ſnares upon ſinners.* Pſ. x. 7. What a vaſt number of ſnares muſt he ſee in the world, to compare them to drops of rain. He ſays expreſly *upon ſinners*, becauſe being ſo little watchful over their hearts and their thoughts, ſo unconcerned about avoiding the occaſions of ſin, and thinking ſo little of providing themſelves with ſpiritual remedies, and what is worſe than all this, walking continually in the midſt of the flames of the world, how can they chuſe but walk among infinite dangers? It is upon the account of theſe many dangers the Prophet ſaid, *that God will rain ſnares upon the wicked.* Snares in youth and ſnares in old age, ſnares in riches and ſnares in poverty, ſnares in honour and ſnares in diſhonour, ſnares in company and ſnares when a man is alone, ſnares in adverſity and ſnares in proſperity; in fine, every one of a man's ſenſes, as the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and the reſt, lay ſnares in his way. There are ſo many, in ſhort, of theſe ſnares that the Prophet cries out aloud, ſaying, *Snares upon you, O inhabitants of the earth.* Jerem. xlviii. 43. Would God but open our eyes a little, as he did St. Anthony's, we ſhould ſee all the world full of ſnares, entangled one in another, and

ſhould

ſhould cry out with him, "O, who ſhall be able to avoid them all!" It is this that is the deſtruction of ſo many ſouls as periſh every day. And therefore St. Bernard ſays, with tears, "that there is ſcarce one ſhip in ten caſt away in the ſea of Marſeilles;" whilſt, on the contrary, there is ſcarce one ſoul in ten that is not loſt in the ſea of this world. Who then will not fear ſo dangerous a world? who will not endeavour to avoid ſo many ſnares? who can, without trembling, go barefoot among ſo many ſerpents? who will run unarmed amongſt ſo many enemies, unprovided amongſt ſo many occaſions of ſin, without a medicine amongſt ſo many mortal diſeaſes? who will not endeavour to get out of this Egypt? who will not fly from this Babylon? Exod. xii. Jerem. li. Who will not endeavour to be delivered from theſe flames of Sodom and Gomorrah, and to ſave himſelf in the mountain of a good life? Gen. xix. Since this world is full of ſo many ſnares, and precipices, and burns in the flames of ſo many vices, who will think himſelf ſecure? *Can any one*, (ſays the Wiſe-man,) *hide fire in his boſom, and his cloaths not be burnt? Or can he walk over hot coals without burning the bottom of his feet?* Prov. vi. 27, 28. *He that toucheth pitch*, (ſays Eccleſiaſticus,) *ſhall be defiled therewith, and he that hath fellowſhip with a proud man ſhall be like unto him.* Eccl. xiii. 1.

SECTION IV.

Of the Blindneſs and Darkneſs of the World.

10. To this infinite number of ſnares and dangers add another evil, which makes them greater, and is the blindneſs and darkneſs of worldly men, excellently repreſented to us by the Egyptian darkneſs, which was ſo thick that they could feel it with their hands; and during the three days it continued, no body ſtirred out of the place he was in, nor could ſee his neighbour, though he ſtood juſt by him. Exod. x. Such as this, and much more if poſſible, is the darkneſs that covers the world. For what greater blindneſs than for men to believe, and yet live as they do? to make ſo much account of their fellow-creatures, and to take ſo little notice of God? to be ſo careful of obſerving the laws of the world, and ſo negligent in keeping of God's commandments? to take ſo much pains about the body, which is at the beſt but a brute beaſt, and to be ſo little concerned for the ſoul, which is no leſs than the image of the Divine Majeſty? to lay up ſo much

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ſtore for this life, which will perhaps be at an end to-morrow, and to provide nothing for the next, which muſt laſt for all eternity? to be ſo ſolicitous about raiſing a fortune upon earth, and not to move ſo much as one ſtep for the acquiring of heavenly good? What greater blindneſs than to live ſo negligently as if life were never to end, when we know we are to die, and that moment to decide what ſhall be for ever? For what is it ſinners, who are to die to-morrow, do leſs than if they were never to die at all? What greater blindneſs than to loſe the inheritance of Heaven for the ſatisfying of a hungry appetite? to be ſo careful about an eſtate, and to have ſo little regard for conſcience? to deſire that all things ſhould be good, except only a man's own life? You will find the world ſo full of ſuch blindneſſes, that you will believe almoſt all mankind is enchanted and bewitched, ſo as not to ſee, though they have eyes, nor hear, though they have ears; and though they are as ſharp-ſighted as eagles to diſcover the things of the earth, yet they are as blind as beetles to thoſe of Heaven? Thus it happened with St. Paul, when he went to perſecute the church; for as ſoon as ever he was thrown down upon the ground he could ſee nothing at all, though he had his eyes open. This is what happens to all thoſe unhappy wretches who having their eyes wide open to the things of the world, yet keep them ſhut to all that is of God.

SECTION V.

Of the Multitude of Sins there are in the World.

Since therefore there are ſo many ſnares in the world, and ſo much darkneſs, what can a man expect here but to be continually ſtumbling and falling? Of all the miſeries in the world this is the greateſt, and that which ought to give us moſt averſion to it. This was the only argument of St. Cyprian made uſe of, to perſuade his friend to a contempt of the world. L. 2. Ep. 2. ad Donat. He ſuppoſes to this end, that they were both of them on the top of a very high mountain, from whence he had a proſpect of all the world; pointed out to his friend, as it were, with his finger all the ſeas and all the countries, all the markets and all the courts of judicature, full of thoſe ſeveral ſins and injuſtices which which are to be found in all parts, that ſo beholding, as it were, with his eyes ſo many and ſo great evils as there are in the world, he might underſtand what a horror and dread he ought to have of it,

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and how much he was obliged to Almighty God for having withdrawn him from them all. Do you, in imitation of this proceeding, get up to the top of this ſame mountain, caſt your eyes a little upon all the market-places, all the palaces, all the courts, and all the ſhops in the world, you will there ſee ſo many ſorts of ſins, ſo much corruption, ſo many diſtractions, ſo many cheats, ſo many perjuries, ſo many robberies, ſo much envy, ſo much flattery, ſo much vanity, and, above all, ſuch an entire forgetfulneſs of God and ſo great a neglect of a man's own ſalvation, that you cannot but be amazed at ſo much diſorder. You will ſee the greater part of men living like brute beaſts, following the bent and impulſe of their own paſſions, without having any more regard to the laws, either of juſtice or of reaſon, than Heathens, who have no knowledge at all of God, and who think man has nothing elſe to do but to live and die. You will ſee the innocent oppreſſed, the guilty acquitted, the virtuous contemned, and ſinners honoured and promoted. You will ſee the poor and humble trampled upon, whilſt favour and intereſt get the better in all things of virtue. You will ſee juſtice ſold, truth ſlighted, ſhame loſt, arts ruined, offices abuſed, and all ſorts of employs for the moſt part corrupted. You will ſee many knaves that deſerve to be ſeverely puniſhed for their villanies become rich, honoured and courted by every body, and all this by their thefts, their cheats, and a thouſand other unlawful means. You will ſee theſe and many others, who have ſcarce any more than the ſhape of man, filling the greateſt places and preferred to the moſt honourable employs. You will ſee, in fine, that men love and adore their money more than they do God, whilſt all laws, both divine and human, are corrupted by avarice, and almoſt all the world over there is nothing of juſtice to be ſeen, but the mere name and ſhadow of it. When you have ſeen all theſe things, you will underſtand how much reaſon the Prophet had for ſaying, *The Lord has looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to ſee if there is any one that underſtands or ſeeks after God. But they are all gone aſtray and are become unprofitable; there is no body that does what is good, no not ſo much as one.* Pſ. xiii. 2, 3. Nor does God complain any leſs by his Prophet Oſee, when he ſays, *There is no truth, there is no mercy, there is no knowledge of God upon the earth.* But on the contrary, *malice and lies, and man-ſlaughters, and thefts, and adulteries, are ſpread like water all over the face of it, and blood has followed blood.* Oſee. iv. 1, 2.

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11. In fine, that you may the better ſee what the world is, caſt your eyes upon the head that governs it, and by that means you will perceive the condition of the thing ſo governed. For if it be true, as Jeſus Chriſt ſaid, that the devil is the prince of this world, that is, of wicked men, what muſt we expect from a body that has ſuch a head, and from a commonwealth that has ſuch a ruler? This alone is enough to let you underſtand that the world itſelf muſt be like thoſe who are lovers of it. What kind of a place then muſt it be but a den of thieves, an army of cut-throats, a ſtye full of ſwine, a galley full of ſlaves, a lake full of ſerpents and baſiliſks? Now if the world be ſuch a thing as this, why, ſays a philoſopher, ſhall not I leave ſuch a filthy place, ſo full of treacheries, deceits and ſins, that there is ſcarce room left for honeſty, piety or juſtice; a place where all kinds of vices reign, where one brother takes up arms againſt another, where a ſon wiſhes for the death of his father, a huſband for the death of his wife, and the wife for that of her huſband? where there are ſo few perſons that do not either ſteal or cheat, ſince great men, as well as little ones, have their ways of robbing and cozening, though under ſpecious pretences? where, in ſhort, there are ſo many fires of luſt, of impurity, of anger, ambition, and many other vices, continually burning? Who will not deſire to fly from ſuch a world? It was, without doubt, the deſire of the Prophet, who cried out, *Who will carry me into the deſert, or into ſome place that is out of the way of paſſengers, and I will forſake my people, and will retire from them, becauſe they are all of them adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men.* Jerem. v. 2. All that has been ſaid of this matter hitherto belongs to the wicked in general, though no body can deny but there are ſeveral good men in the world, of all ſtates and conditions, and it is for their ſake that God bears with the reſt.

12. When you have weighed all theſe things, conſider how reaſonable it is to abhor and deteſt ſo great an evil, in which, had God but opened your eyes, you might have ſeen more devils and more ſins than there are atoms in the rays of the ſun; and with this conſideration nouriſh and encreaſe in your ſouls the deſire of leaving this world, in ſpirit at leaſt, ſighing with the royal Prophet, and ſaying with him, *Who will give me wings like a dove's, and I will fly and take my reſt?* Pſ. liv. 7.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

How deceitful the Happineſs of the World is.

13. Theſe, and many more like them, are the diſappointments and croſſes that attend the wretched felicities of this world, by which you may perceive how much more gall there is than honey, and how much more wormwood than ſugar: I forbear to take notice of ſeveral other miſeries. This happineſs and delight, beſides being ſo ſhort and miſerable, is alſo filthy, becauſe it makes men carnal and impure; it is brutiſh, in as much as it makes men brutiſh; it is fooliſh, becauſe it makes men fools, and very often deprives them of their ſenſe and reaſon; it is inconſtant, becauſe it never continues in the ſame ſtate; it is, in fine, treacherous and falſe, becauſe when we ſeem to want it moſt, it leaves us and vaniſhes into air. But I will not omit ſpeaking of one evil that attends it, which perhaps is worſe than all the reſt, viz. its being fraudulent and deceitful, for it appears to be what it is not, and promiſes what it has not to give; ſo that by this means it draws moſt men after it to their eternal ruin. For as there is true and falſe gold, as there are true and counterfeit jewels, which look as if they were of value and are not, ſo there are true and falſe goods, a true happineſs and a falſe one, which has nothing at all of happineſs but the bare appearance. Such is the happineſs of this world, which deceives and cheats us with its outſide gloſs and colour. For, as, according to Ariſtotle, "it often happens that lies, notwithſtanding their falſehood, have a greater appearance of truth than even truth itſelf, ſo it is worth our obſerving that there are ſome evils, which, though they are real evils, look more like good than even ſome things that are really good." Such is the happineſs of the world, and therefore ignorant perſons are eaſily deluded by it, as birds are decoyed, and fiſhes caught with a bait. It is the nature of worldly things to preſent themſelves to us under a pleaſant appearance and with a flattering and deceitful look, which promiſes a great deal of joy and ſatisfaction, but as ſoon as experience has undeceived us, we perceive the hook was hid under the bait, and ſee clearly, that all is not gold that glitters. This you will find by experience happens in all worldly things. Do but conſider the pleaſures of a new-married couple, you will ſee their happineſs generally laſt but for a few days, and then follow diſcontents, troubles and cares. They ſoon find afflictions from children, diſeaſes, abſence, jealouſy,

diſcord, miſcarriages, misfortunes, grief, and, in fine, from death itſelf, which is inevitable, and ſometimes ſurprizes them early, and changes their wedding-joys, not yet completed, into the tears of a perpetual widowhood. What greater deceit and hypocriſy than this? How contentedly does a young woman go to the marriage-bed, becauſe her eyes are only open to that which appears outwardly; but alas! how much more reaſon would ſhe have to cry than laugh, if ſhe did but ſee the train of miſeries that follow her? Rebecca deſired to have children, but when ſhe found herſelf big, and perceived the contention that was between the two infants in her womb, ſhe ſaid, *If this muſt have happened to me, what need was there of my conceiving?* Gen. xxv. 22. O how many have been thus deceived, when, having obtained what they wiſhed for, they find it to be quite another thing than what they expected.

14. What ſhall I ſay of employments, of honours, preferments and dignities? How delightful they appear at firſt ſight, yet when the falſe luſtre is worn off, what trains of paſſions and ſolicitudes, what envy, what hardſhips then diſcover themſelves? What ſhall I ſay again of thoſe who are engaged in unlawful love? How pleaſant do they find the entrance into this dark labyrinth at the beginning? but when once they have got in, what hardſhips are they to undergo? How many unhappy nights muſt they endure? How many dangers muſt they expoſe themſelves to? becauſe the fruit of this forbidden tree is guarded by the fury of a venomous dragon, that is, by the cruel ſword, either of a parent or of a jealous huſband, in which action a man often loſes his life, his honour, his eſtate, and his ſoul, all in a moment. You may, in like manner, take a view of the lives of covetous and worldly men, of thoſe who aim at glory, either by their arms or by favour, and you will find, in all theſe, the tragical effects of fortunate and pleaſant beginnings, which have been followed by unhappy ends. For the nature of this cup of Babylon is to be gilt without, but to be full of poiſon within. Apoc. xvii. 4.

15. What then is all the glory of the world but a Syren's ſong, which lulls us aſleep, a ſweet poiſon that carries death along with it, a viper finely party-coloured without, and full of venom within? If it delights, it is only to deceive us; if it raiſes us up, it is to caſt us down again; if it diverts us, it is to make us melancholy. It expects an unreaſonable intereſt for whatever it beſtows. If you have a child born, and it ſhould happen to die, you would be ten times more troubled at its death

death than you were pleaſed at its birth. Any loſs is always the occaſion of much more grief, than gain is of joy; ſickneſs is much more afflicting than health is comforting; an affront diſcontents a man more than honour pleaſes or charms him: for nature has been ſo unequal in diſpoſing of pains and pleaſures, that thoſe are more able to torment us than theſe are to give us any eaſe and comfort. A thorough conſideration of all this will make us plainly ſee how falſe and deceitful this happineſs is.

SECTION VII.

The Concluſion of all that has been ſaid.

16. Conſider here the true figure of the world, notwithſtanding its outward appearing to be what it is not, and conſider what its happineſs is; it is ſhort, miſerable, dangerous, blind and deceitful. If ſo, what can the world be but a magazine of labours, as a philoſopher wiſely terms it, a ſchool of vanities, a market of deceit, a labyrinth of errors, a priſon of darkneſs, a highway full of robbers, a muddy lake, and a ſea that is perpetually ſtormy? What is this world but a barren ſoil, a field full of ſtones, a wood full of thorns, a green meadow full of ſnakes and ſerpents, a garden that has flowers, but no fruit, a river of tears, a fountain of cares, a ſweet poiſon, a ſerious comedy, and a pleaſing frenzy. Are there any delights in it which are not falſe, or any miſeries which are not real? Its eaſe is full of trouble, its ſecurity has no grounds to build upon, its fear is without reaſon, its labours without any advantage, its tears without any effect, its deſigns without ſucceſs, its hope vain, its joy counterfeit, and its grief true.

17. You ſee how lively a repreſentation this world is of hell; for if hell be nothing but a place of torments and of ſins, what is there the world abounds with more? The royal Prophet was of this opinion, when he ſaid, *His iniquity ſhall encompaſs him on all ſides day and night, and labour and injuſtice ſhall be in the very middle of him*, Pſ. liv. 11. This is the fruit the world produces, this the merchandiſe that is ſold in it, this the trade that is ſettled in every corner of it, viz. *labour* and *injuſtice*, which are the evils of pain and the evils of guilt. If therefore hell is nothing but a place of torment and of guilt, why do we not call this world, in ſome meaſure, at leaſt a hell, ſince we ſee ſo much of both in it? St. Bernard looked upon it as ſuch, when he ſaid, "This world would appear to be almoſt as miſerable as hell, if it were not for the hopes we

have whilſt we are in this life of obtaining a better." Serm. 4. de Aſcenſ.

SECTION VIII.

That true Felicity and Content are to be found no where but in God.

18. Having hitherto taken ſo clear a view of the miſery and deceit of worldly happineſs, our next buſineſs will be to conſider that the true happineſs and reſt, which the world cannot give us, is to be found in God. Were worldly men but thoroughly convinced of this they would not, as they do now, take ſo much pains in purſuit of worldly pleaſures. In ſhort, my deſign therefore is to prove the importance of this truth, not by the authorities and teſtimonies of faith, but purely by the force of reaſon.

19. For effecting of this, you are to underſtand that no creature whatever can enjoy a complete and perfect happineſs till it obtains its laſt end, that is, the laſt perfection which is proportioned to its being and nature. For as long as it is without this, it cannot but be unquiet and diſſatisfied, becauſe it is ſenſible it wants ſomething that is neceſſary for it. I put the queſtion now, what man's laſt end is, upon the poſſeſſion of which all his felicity depends, which divines call *his formal beatitude?* That this is God is undeniable; who, as he is his firſt beginning, ſo is he his laſt end. Now as it is impoſſible for a man to have two firſt beginnings, it is no leſs ſo to have two laſt ends, becauſe this would be to have two Gods. If therefore God alone is man's laſt end and ultimate happineſs, and if it is impoſſible for him to have two laſt ends, there is conſequently the ſame impoſſibility of his finding any happineſs but in God. For as the glove is made for the hand, and the ſcabbard for the ſword, ſo that there is no putting them to any other uſe; in like manner man's heart, having been created for God, cannot find any reſt but in him. It is with him alone that he is content and ſatisfied, and without him very poor and miſerable. The reaſon of it is, becauſe the underſtanding and the will, which are the two nobleſt faculties, being the principal ſeat of bliſs, whilſt they are diſturbed and uneaſy man cannot poſſibly enjoy any peace and quiet. And it is a plain caſe that theſe two faculties cannot be at reſt, but in the enjoyment of God. For as, ſays St. Thomas "our underſtanding cannot know or underſtand ſo much as not to be capable and deſirous of knowing more, if there be more to

be

be known; ſo our will can never love or enjoy ſo many goods as not to be capable of more, if more be given it." S. Thom. 1. 2. Qu. 2. Art. 8. Therefore theſe two powers will never be ſatisfied till they ſhall find an univerſal object, in which all things are contained; and which, as ſoon as ever it is known and loved, there remains no more truths to be known, nor any more goods to be enjoyed. Hence it follows that no created being whatſoever, though it were the poſſeſſion of all the world, is able to fill and ſatisfy man's heart; there is none but God, for whom he was created, can do this. Thus Plutarch writes of a private ſoldier, who from one elevation to another came to be emperor, and ſeeing himſelf raiſed to this honour he had ſo long deſired, and yet wanting the ſatisfaction he expected, he ſaid, "I have lived in all ſtates and conditions, and have found no ſatisfaction in any of them." By which we may perceive it is impoſſible for him to find any reſt but in God, who has been created for none but God.

20. That you may underſtand this the better, look upon the needle of the compaſs, and there you will ſee a lively figure of this neceſſary doctrine. The nature of this needle is to point always to the north when it has been once touched to the loadſtone; God, who created this ſtone, gave it ſuch a natural inclination to turn always that way. And you may ſee by experience what a violent motion it is in, and how reſtleſs, till it points exactly thither, and then it immediately ſtops and remains fixed. It is not to be doubted, but that God has created man with the ſame natural inclination and tendency toward him, as toward his pole, his center, and his laſt end; and therefore it is that, like the needle, he is continually diſturbed and unquiet, as long as he is turned from God, though he ſhould enjoy all the riches in the world; but as ſoon as, like the needle, he returns to him, he ceaſes from his violent motion, and enjoys perfect and entire reſt, becauſe it is in God he is to find his peace. Whence we may infer, that he alone is happy who poſſeſſes God, and that the nearer a man is to God the nearer he is to this happineſs. And therefore the juſt, though the world is unacquainted with their happineſs, are the only happy men, becauſe, whilſt they are in this life, they draw as nigh as they can to Almighty God.

21. The reaſon is, becauſe true felicity does not conſiſt in ſenſible and corporal pleaſures, as the Epicurean philoſophers would have it, and after them the Mahometans, and laſtly, the followers of both theſe ſects, that is, wicked Chriſtians, who in words renounce the law of Mahomet, but follow it in their

their actions, and in this world ſeek no other paradiſe than his. For what is it the great and rich men of the world ſpend their time in, but in hunting after all manner of pleaſures and divertiſements; and what is this but to make Epicures pleaſure our laſt end, and to look for Mahomet's paradiſe in this world? O unhappy ſcholars of ſuch maſters! if you deteſt the names of theſe men, why do you not hate their life and manners? If you will enjoy Mahomet's paradiſe in this life, you muſt expect to loſe our Saviour's in the next. Man's happineſs does not conſiſt either in the body or in the goodneſs of it, as the Turks pretend, but in the ſpirit and in ſpiritual and inviſible goods, as was the opinion of the great philoſophers of old, and it was what Chriſtians ſtill hold, though after quite another manner, Pſ. xliv. 14, 15.

The royal Prophet ſignified the ſame to us, by theſe words: *All the glory of the king's daughter is within, where ſhe glitters with gold, and is cloathed with ſeveral colours:* and where ſhe enjoys ſo much peace and comfort as never all the kings of the earth have had, or are ever like to have; unleſs we will ſay, that they have more ſatisfaction than the friends of God, which many of them will deny, who very cheerfully quitted great kingdoms and riches as ſoon as they taſted of God. Pope Gregory the Great will alſo deny it, who had ſufficient experience of both ſtates, and was placed by force in St. Peter's chair, on which he always ſighed and wept for the poor cell he left in his monaſtery, as a ſlave in Barbary ſighs after his country and liberty.

SECTION IX.

Examples to prove all that has been ſaid.

22. But becauſe this miſtake is ſo great and ſo univerſal, I will add one reaſon more, as convincing as the former, that the lovers of the world may diſcover by it how impoſſible it is to find that happineſs they look for in the world. To this purpoſe you are to preſuppoſe that there is much more goes to the making of a thing perfect than to leave it imperfect; becauſe, for effecting of the firſt, it muſt neceſſarily have all thoſe conditions which are abſolutely requiſite for its perfection; whilſt, on the contrary, any one ſingle imperfection makes the whole piece imperfect. It is alſo to be preſuppoſed, that a man muſt have all things according to his own deſire, to make himſelf completely happy, and that any one thing contrary to his wiſh goes a great way farther towards making him

him miſerable, than the enjoyment of all the reſt towards making him happy. I have myſelf ſeen ſeveral perſons of very conſiderable rank and fortune, live the moſt unhappy lives of any men in the world; becauſe the ſatisfaction they had in what they enjoyed was nothing comparable to the torment of not being able to obtain what they deſired. For it is certain that this latter, which is like a thorn ſtuck into the very heart is more grievous and troubleſome than the other is acceptable and pleaſing; for it is the obtaining of his deſire, not the poſſeſſion of goods, that makes a man happy. St. Auguſtine, in his Treatiſe of the Cuſtoms of the Church, explained this point very excellently in theſe words: "I do not think a man can be ſaid to be happy who does not enjoy what he loves, let it be ever ſo mean and ordinary; nor do I look upon that man any happier who does not love what he enjoys, though the thing be ever ſo good and excellent; nor is he in a better condition than either of the others, who does not deſire that which is worth his deſiring; becauſe he that cannot get what he deſires is in a great deal of torment; he that has what is not worth his deſiring is notoriouſly cheated; and he who does not deſire that which is worth his deſiring, is a mere fool and madman. From whence we conclude, that our happineſs depends upon the poſſeſſing of no other good but the ſovereign good, without which there is no ſuch thing as happineſs." S. De Morib. Eccl. Cath. c. 3. So that poſſeſſion, love and ſovereign good, theſe three things put together, make a man completely happy, without which no man can be ſo, though he poſſeſſes ever ſo much.

23. Though I could bring many examples to make this out, I will bring only that of Aman, king of Aſſuerus's creature and favourite. This man being highly offended that Mordocheus, one of the guards at the palace-gate, did not pay him the reſpect he looked for, ſent for all his friends and his wife, and made this ſhort diſcourſe to them: *You all know what a rich man I am, how many children I have, and how much I am in favour with the king, and to what places and dignities he has promoted me, before any of his courtiers or ſubjects. Beſides all this, the queen has invited none but the king and myſelf to come and dine with her to-morrow. And yet, though I have all theſe things, I ſeem to have nothing at all, as long as I ſee Mordocheus, who ſtands before the palace-gate, refuſing me the reſpect I look for.* Eſther v. 10. &c. Do but conſider how this ſmall affront was the occaſion of much more diſcontent and trouble than all his riches and honours were of happineſs and ſatisfaction. Con-

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ſider likewiſe, how far man is from being happy, as long as he is in this world, and how near he is, on the contrary, to miſery, ſince there are many goods required to the obtaining of the firſt, whilſt the want of any one is enough to make us fall into the latter. Now if this be true, who can avoid being unhappy in this world? Is there any king, any emperor ſo powerful as to have all things according to his own will, and never to meet with any thing contrary to his inclinations? Let us put the caſe, he ſhould never receive any contradiction from men, who can ſecure himſelf againſt all the ſtrokes of nature, againſt all the infirmities of the body, or all the fears or vain imaginations of the ſoul, which is frequently ſo apprehenſive when there is no reaſon for it, and diſturbs herſelf without any cauſe? Poor, unhappy, miſerable man, how can you think of finding any content in the ways of the world, when it is more than what the greateſt princes and monarchs of it have been ever able to do? If all goods whatever muſt neceſſarily contribute to the acquiring of this one good, when ſhall you, who are at ſuch a diſtance from God, ever be ſo happy as to ſtand in need of nothing in the world? There is none but God can give you this happineſs; and if there be any man that does in ſome manner enjoy it in this life, know it is only he who loves and enjoys God; becauſe it is a condition of friendſhip, 'that all things are in common amongſt friends.'

24. If all theſe plain and evident reaſons cannot convince you, but that you are more eaſily wrought upon by experience, addreſs yourſelf to Solomon, ſo celebrated for his wiſdom, and deſire him, ſince he has ſailed in this ſea, and was more ſucceſsful than any other in diſcovering all ſorts of worldly grandeurs and delights, to give you an account of what he diſcovered, and whether he found any thing that could ſatisfy him, and you ſhall have no other anſwer from him, but *vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, and all is vanity*, Eccleſ. i. 2. &c. ch. xii. 8. Do not doubt to give credit to ſuch an experienced man as Solomon was, who ſpeaks to you, not upon bare ſpeculation but upon a certain knowledge. And do not think that you or any body elſe is able to diſcover more than he has done? For what prince in the world was ever wiſer, richer, better attended, more glorious or more reverenced than he? who ever tried more different ſorts of paſtimes and pleaſures, as hunting and muſic, women dreſſing, riding, and the like, than he? And yet, after having tried all, he made no other advantage of them but what you have heard. Why will you make a freſh trial of what ſo many have tried before

before you? Do not fancy you can find what Solomon could not, ſince you have no other world to ſearch in, nor any better means to find what you ſeek than he had; and ſince he could never ſatisfy his longings with ſo plentiful a harveſt, do not perſuade yourſelf you ſhall ever be able to do it with the bare gleanings. Seeking of pleaſure was the employ of all his time, and it is very probable, as St. Jerom obſerves, in a letter of his to Euſtochium, "that this was the occaſion of his fall." And will you be ſo mad as to caſt yourſelf headlong after him? But becauſe men rather believe experience than reaſon, therefore God has perhaps permitted this king to try all the goods and pleaſures of this world, that he might, after trying, give us a character of them, that ſo the miſery of one man might be an example to all the reſt, and prevent their falling into the like misfortune.

25. Now if this be ſo, I may with a great deal of reaſon cry out with the Prophet, *Sons of men, how long will you have your hearts hardened? Why do you love vanity and ſeek after a lie,* Pſ. xl. 3. He does well in giving it the name of *vanity* and a *lie;* becauſe if there were nothing elſe in worldly things but vanity, (which ſignifies no more than to be nothing) there were no great hurt in them; but there is ſomething ſtill much worſe than this, which is a lie and a falſe appearance, by which we are perſuaded to believe them ſomething, when in effect they are juſt nothing. For this reaſon Solomon ſays, *That comelineſs is deceitful, and beauty vain,* Prov. xxxi. 30. To be vain had been no great matter, had it not been deceitful too; becauſe vanity, when once known, can do but little harm; the greateſt danger is in that which truly and really is vain, though it does not appear to be ſo. By this we may ſee how great a hypocrite the world is. For as hypocrites endeavour to hide the faults they have been guilty of, ſo the rich men of this world do all they can to conceal the miſeries they continually groan under. Some, though they are ſinners, would paſs for ſaints, and others for happy men, though they are miſerable. If you call this into queſtion, do but come a little nearer to one of thoſe who ſeem outwardly to be ſo happy; feel his pulſe a little, and then put your hands upon his heart, and you will ſee what difference there is betwixt that which appears on the outſide, and that which is hid within. There are ſome plants in the fields which look very pretty at a diſtance, but when you come and touch them, caſt forth ſuch an ungrateful ſmell, that a man is forced immediately to fling them away from him: thus, when the hands touch they cor-

rect the miſtake of the eyes. Such are moſt of the rich and mighty men of the world. For if you conſider their great eſtates, their noble houſes, and their retinues, a man would take them to be the only happy men upon earth. But if you go a little nearer, and ſearch into the receſſes of their ſouls, and into the ſecret corners of their houſes, you will find them not the ſame men they ſeem to be. So that ſeveral of thoſe who at firſt aimed at great eſtates, when they conſidered them at a diſtance, no ſooner had a nearer view of them, but they entirely refuſed them as many Heathens (according to ſeveral hiſtories) have done. And in the Lives of the Emperors we read that there have not been wanting ſome who, notwithſtanding their being Heathens, have refuſed to accept of the empire, though they have been elected by the general conſent of the whole army, and this becauſe they knew that this flower, which ſeemed to be ſo fine and beautiful, had nothing but thorns and briars underneath it.

26. Why then, O ye children of men, who are created according to the likeneſs of God, who are redeemed with his blood, who are deſigned to be the companions of angels, why do you love vanity and ſeek after a lie, imagining with yourſelves that you ſhall receive any comfort from thoſe falſe goods, which never were nor ever will be able to give you the leaſt ſatisfaction imaginable? Why have you left the table of angels for the food of beaſts? why have you refuſed the delights and ſweet ſmells of paradiſe for the bitterneſs and ſtink of this world? How is it poſſible that ſo many calamities and miſeries, as you are daily ſenſible of, ſhould not ſuffice to make you deny any farther allegiance to ſo cruel a tyrant as this is? We ſeem herein to be like certain lewd women, that give themſelves entirely up to ſome debauched fellow, who devours and ſpends all they are worth, and then beats and kicks them every day, and yet they are fond of their ſlavery, and doat on him that makes it.

27. Wherefore from all that has been ſaid, I conclude, that if there are ſo many reaſons, ſo many examples, and ſo many experiments, to prove that the happineſs and eaſe we look for in the world, is to be found no where but in God, why do we not ſeek for it in him? It is what St. Auguſtine adviſes in theſe words: "Compaſs the ſea and earth, and go where you pleaſe; but aſſure yourſelf that whereſoever you go you will be miſerable, if you do not go to God."

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Concluſion of all that is contained in this Firſt Book.

1. WE may plainly gather from all that has been hitherto ſaid, that there is no kind of good whatever which is not included in virtue; which ſhews it to be ſo great and ſo univerſal a good that there is nothing, either in heaven or earth, to which we can better compare it than to God himſelf. For, as God is ſo univerſal a good, that the perfections of all other goods are found in him, ſo are they in ſome manner to be found in virtue. We ſee that, amongſt created things, ſome are modeſt, others beautiful; ſome honourable, others profitable; ſome are agreeable, and others again have ſeveral perfections: now thoſe of all are the perfecteſt and the moſt worthy of our love which have the greateſt ſhare of all theſe different perfections. If this be true, what eſteem, what love ought we to have for virtue, in which none of all theſe perfections are wanting? For if we conſider modeſty, what can be more modeſt than virtue, which is the very ſource and fountain of all modeſty? If we look for honour, what can deſerve honour and reſpect if virtue does not? If we have an eſteem for beauty, what can be more beautiful than virtue is? Plato, ſpeaking of its beauty, ſays, "that if we could but ſee it, it would draw the whole world after it." If we have any concern for profit, what can we expect any greater profit from than from virtue, ſince it is by it that we are to acquire the chief good? *Length of days* (with the good of eternity) *are in its right hand, and riches and glory in its left*, Prov. iii. 16. If pleaſure be all that you long for, what greater pleaſure than that of a good conſcience, of charity, of peace, of the liberty which the children of God enjoy, and of all the conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, who never fails to keep company with virtue? If credit and reputation be the object of your aim, *the juſt ſhall be remembered for all eternity, but the name of the wicked ſhall grow rotten*, and vaniſh away like ſmoke. Pſ. iii. 7. Prov. x. 7. If you ſeek for knowledge, what deeper knowledge than knowing of God, and underſtanding the beſt means for directing of your life to your laſt end? If we have a mind to gain the love and affection of men, what can be more lovely than virtue, or more conducible to this end? For, according to Cicero, as corporal beauty, which we ſo much admire, conſiſts in the exact ſymmetry and due proportion of the members

bers and humours of the body, ſo from the exactneſs and regularity of life is formed ſuch a beauty, as is not only agreeable to God and his angels, but even charms the wicked and a man's greateſt enemies.

2. This is the good which is ſo abſolutely and completely good, as not to have the leaſt mixture of evil in it. It was with a great deal of reaſon that God ſent this ſhort, but glorious embaſſy, to the juſt, which we have mentioned in the very beginning of this book, and with which we are now going to conclude the ſame: *Say to the juſt man, it is well*, Iſa. iii. 10. Tell him he was born happily, and ſhall die happily; tell him he ſhall be bleſſed in his death, and in what is to come after it, as he has been in his life; tell him he ſhall have ſucceſs in all things, in his pleaſures, in his pains, in his labours, in his reſt, in his credit, and in his diſgrace: *Becauſe all things turn to the advantage of thoſe who love God*, Rom. viii. 28. Tell him he has nothing to fear, for though the whole world ſhould be diſturbed and troubled, though the elements ſhould be in confuſion, and though the Heavens themſelves ſhould fall in pieces, he may then lift up his head, becauſe the day of his redemption is at hand. *Tell him it is well*, becauſe the greateſt of all goods, which is God himſelf, is prepared for him, and becauſe he is delivered from the company of the devil, which is the greateſt evil of all. *Tell him that it is well*, becauſe his name is written in the book of life, becauſe God the Father has adopted him for his ſon, becauſe God the Son has taken him for his brother, and the Holy Ghoſt for his living temple. *Tell him it is well*, becauſe the way he has taken and the party he has followed is advantageous to him in all reſpects, advantageous to the body and advantageous to the ſoul, advantageous in conſideration of God, advantageous in conſideration of men, advantageous for this life and for the next; *becauſe all good things ſhall be beſtowed upon thoſe who ſeek the kingdom of God*, Luke xii. 31. And though perhaps his temporal affairs go not well with him, yet this will turn much more to his advantage, if he does but take it patiently; becauſe, to thoſe that are patient, loſſes prove gains; labours and ſufferings are the occaſions of merit, and combats brings crowns and trophies. As often as Laban leſſened Jacob's wages, with an intention to benefit himſelf thereby, and to prejudice his ſon-in-law, his deſign was thwarted; and what he thought would advantage him and hurt the other, proved quite contrary. Gen. xxxi.

3. Why

3. Why then will you be ſo cruel to yourſelf, and ſo much your own enemy, as to refuſe to embrace that thing which is every way ſo advantageous to you? Can you take any better advice or follow any better party than this? *Happy are the unſpotted in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Happy are thoſe who ſearch into his commandments, and ſeek him with their whole heart,* Pſ. cxviii. 1, 2.

4. If therefore, as the philoſophers ſay, good is the object of our will, and if, of conſequence, the better a thing is the more it deſerves our love, who has corrupted your will ſo as to make it neither reliſh nor enjoy ſo univerſal and ſo great a good? O how much greater an eſteem had king David of it, when he cried out, *Thy law, O Lord, is in the very midſt of my heart,* Pſ. xxxix. 9. Not in a corner, not on one ſide, but in the very middle, the moſt worthy and honourable place of all. As if he had ſaid, this is my greateſt treaſure, this is the moſt important buſineſs I have, and the chief of all my concerns. Worldly men proceed in a direct oppoſition to this, becauſe vanity has the firſt place in their heart, and the law of God the laſt. But this holy man, notwithſtanding his being a king and having much to preſerve and to loſe, trampled all under his feet, and placed nothing but the law of God in the midſt of his heart, as knowing, that if he was but careful in the keeping of this, all the reſt was ſecure enough.

5. What can hinder you now from making a reſolution to follow this example, and to embrace ſo great a good? For if you look upon the obligation, is there any greater than what we all of us owe to Almighty God, purely upon account of what he is? All other obligations of the world do not ſo much as deſerve to be ſo called, if compared with this. If you look for benefits, what greater can there be than thoſe we have received from him, ſince, beſides his having created and redeemed us with his own blood, every thing either in us or out of us, as the body, ſoul, life, health, eſtate, grace, (if we have it) every hour and moment of our lives, all the good deſigns and deſires of our ſoul; whatſoever, in fine, has the name either of being or of good proceed originally from him, who is the fountain of all beings and of all good? If intereſt be your aim, let all the angels and all mankind declare, whether we are capable of any greater intereſt than that of receiving eternal glory, and of being delivered from everlaſting pains and torments; for this is the reward of virtue. If we pretend to the enjoyment of preſent goods, what greater goods

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can we poſſeſs than thoſe twelve privileges abovementioned, which all good men enjoy in this life, the leaſt of which is much more able to content and pleaſe us than all the conditions and treaſures of the world are! What more can we put into this balance than what is here promiſed us! All the excuſes worldly men are uſed to bring againſt us are now quite baffled, and I ſee no hole for them to creep out at, unleſs they wilfully and obſtinately ſtop their ears and ſhut their eyes againſt ſo clear and manifeſt a truth.

6. What then remains but that, having ſeen the perfection and beauty of virtue, you repeat theſe words of the Wiſe Man, ſpeaking of wiſdom, virtue's ſiſter and companion. *I have loved her and ſought after her from my very youth, and I deſire to have her for my ſpouſe, and I was in love with her beauty. Her nobility appears, by God Almighty's familiarity with her; and he who is the Lord of all things has loved her. She it is that teaches the doctrine of God, and that chuſes his works. And if riches are deſired in this life, what is richer than wiſdom, who works all things? But if wiſdom does all things, can there be any thing more ingenious than ſhe is! And if any one loves juſtice, its works produce great virtues; for it teaches temperance and prudence, juſtice and virtue, than which there is nothing more profitable to men in this life. I have reſolved therefore to take her for the compaion of my life, as knowing that ſhe will make me partaker with her of her goods; and ſhe ſhall be my comfort in all my diſtreſs and trouble*, Sap. viii. 2—10. Theſe are the words of the Wiſe Man. What then remains but to conclude this matter, as the bleſſed martyr St. Cyprian concludes a moſt elegant epiſtle he writes to a friend of his, upon the contempt of the world, as follows:

7. "There is (ſays he) but one quiet and ſecure tranquillity, but one ſolid and perpetual ſecurity, which is, when a man, being freed from the ſtorms of this world, and laid up in the ſecure haven of ſalvation, liſts up his eyes from earth to Heaven, and being already admitted into the company and favour of the Lord, is glad to ſee himſelf deſpiſe and undervalue from his heart whatever the world has ſuch an eſteem for. A man in ſuch a condition cannot deſire any thing in this world, becauſe he is already greater than the world itſelf." And a little lower he goes on, ſaying, "There is no need of being very rich, or having any honourable employs, for the obtaining of this happineſs; it is a pure gift of God, beſtowed upon the devout ſoul; for God is ſo liberal and free, that, as the ſun heats, as the day gives light, as the fountain flows,

and

and as the water falls down from a ſteep place, ſo, this Divine ſpirit communicates himſelf freely to all perſons. For this reaſon do you, who are already liſted into this heavenly army, uſe all your endeavours to be faithful in the obſervance of the diſcipline of this warfare, by acts of piety and devotion; let prayer and holy reading be your continual companions; ſometimes do you ſpeak to God, and at other times hearken to what God has to ſay to you. Let him inſtruct you in his commandments; let him have the diſpoſing and ordering of all the concerns of your life; let nobody look upon him as a poor man whom God has once enriched. It is impoſſible for the ſoul to ſuffer hunger and thirſt, that has been filled with the bleſſings and abundance of heavenly things. Then the moſt ſtately buildings, cruſted over with marble and laid over with gold, ſhall be no more eſteemed by you than dirt and clay; then you will underſtand that your chief buſineſs is to adorn and beautify yourſelf, and that this is much the more magnificent and noble ſtructure wherein God repoſes, as in a living temple, and in which the Holy Ghoſt has taken up his habitation. Let us paint this building over, but let it be with innocence; and let the lights of the painting be no others than thoſe of juſtice. Time and age ſhall never be able to deface theſe colours; and when the paint and gilding of material walls ſhall be quite worn off, theſe ſhall look as freſh and lively as ever they did. Artificial and mixed things are all frail and periſhable, and they in whoſe poſſeſſion they are can never aſſure themſelves that they ſhall keep them long, becauſe it is no true poſſeſſion; but this remains with its colours always lively, with its reputation untainted, and with a ſettled love and charity: it cannot either decay or be blaſted, though it may be improved and made more beautiful at the reſurrection." Epiſt. l. 2. ep. 1. ad Donat. Thus far St. Cyprian.

If any body, through the grace and inſpiration of God, without which it is impoſſible for man to do the leaſt good, is convinced and perſuaded, by all the reaſons and arguments we have brought in this book, ſo as to deſire to embrace virtue, the following book will inſtruct him in what is to be done, for the obtaining of his deſire.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE

SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

WHICH TREATS OF

THE DOCTRINE OF VIRTUE;

WITH

NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE

FOR

MAKING A MAN VIRTUOUS.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN SPANISH,

BY THE

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M.DCC.XC.

PREFACE.

FORASMUCH as it is not ſufficient to perſuade man to be virtuous, unleſs we teach him how to be ſo; therefore, having in the foregoing book, urged ſo many and ſuch weighty reaſons to excite our hearts to the love of virtue, it will be requiſite to come now to the uſe and practice of it, by giving ſuch inſtructions as are neceſſary to make a man truly virtuous. And becauſe, according to the ſaying of wiſe man, the firſt virtue is to avoid all vice, after which a man may apply himſelf to the practice of virtue, we will therefore divide this book into two parts: In the firſt of which we will ſpeak of the moſt uſual or common vices, and the remedies againſt them; and in the ſecond, of the virtues. But before we enter upon this point we muſt lay down two principles, which muſt be preſuppoſed by him that is reſolved to follow this way.

SECTION I.

Of the firſt Thing to be preſuppoſed by him that deſires to ſerve God.

1. He that reſolves to offer himſelf up to the ſervice of God and to change his life, muſt, in the firſt place, and above all things, have a good opinion of the deſign he has in hand, and put that value upon it as it deſerves: I mean, that he ſhould look upon this as the moſt important buſineſs, the greateſt treaſure he can have; as the beſt and moſt prudent action he can undertake — Nay, I would have him perſuade himſelf there is no other treaſure, no other buſineſs, no other prudence in the world, but this: this is the advice the Prophet gives us, when he ſays, *Learn, O Iſrael, where prudence, where ſtrength, where underſtanding is, that you may at*

the ſame time know where length of life is, and an abundance of all things, where the light of the eyes and peace is. Baruch iii. 14. God upon the ſame account ſays, by the Prophet Jeremiah, *Let not the wiſe man take a pride in his wiſdom, let not the ſtrong man take a pride in his ſtrength, let not the rich man take a pride in his riches; but he that takes a pride in any thing, let it be in his knowing and underſtanding me.* Jerem. ix. 23, 24. for this is the ſum of all goods. *And if there is any one amongſt the children of men, of a conſummate wiſdom, if he hath not this wiſdom too, he ſhall not be eſteemed at all.* Sap. ix. 6.

2. The holy ſcripture, which ſo ſeriouſly recommends and praiſes this buſineſs to us, excites us to it in a very particular manner. It is this we are invited to by all creatures in Heaven and earth, by the voices and cries of the church, by all kinds of laws, both divine and human; by the example of all the ſaints, who, being enlightened from Heaven, deſpiſed the world, and puſhed on the deſign they had of embracing virtue with ſuch vigour and love, that many ſuffered themſelves to be torn in pieces, to be broiled upon gridirons, and to undergo a thouſand torments, rather than commit the leaſt offence againſt God, and be out of his favour, though but for a moment. It is this, in fine, that, whatever has been treated of in the foregoing book, invites and obliges us to, becauſe there is nothing there but what is in favour of virtue, and what ſhews us of how ineſtimable a value it is. Each of theſe things duly conſidered is ſufficient to convince us of the importance of this affair; and if ſo, what effect muſt all of them together have upon us? So that he who reſolves to follow virtue, may by this perceive how great and how glorious a deſign he undertakes, and how reaſonable it is, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter, to give himſelf up entirely to it. Let this therefore be the firſt thing to be preſuppoſed in this affair.

SECTION II.

Of the ſecond Thing to be preſuppoſed by him that deſires to ſerve God.

1. The ſecond thing to be preſuppoſed is, that ſince it is a buſineſs of ſuch worth and merit, you proſecute it with all the vigour imaginable, and with a reſolution and readineſs to bear up againſt all the contradictions and difficulties you may probably meet with, in carrying on of your deſign. You are to look upon all theſe troubles as little or nothing, in compariſon with ſo glorious an undertaking as that you have in hand, and to conſider that it is the order of nature, that the acquiſition of any thing that is honourable ſhould coſt much labour. For no ſooner ſhall you reſolve upon this buſineſs, but hell itſelf will raiſe its power and forces againſt you. The fleſh, which loves any thing that is delightful and charming, and from its very birth is bent upon all kinds of evil, and has been ſo ever ſince it was firſt intoxicated with the poiſon of the old venomous ſerpent, will continually and with much importunity preſs and invite you to all its uſual delights and pleaſures. Depraved cuſtom, which is as ſtrong as nature itſelf, will immediately oppoſe this change, and will repreſent it to you as a thing very difficult. Becauſe, as the turning of a river from its ordinary courſe and channel is a laborious work, ſo the turning of a man out of the way which evil cuſtom has for a long time led him in, to make him take another, is, in ſome manner, as hard and toilſome. Beſides, the world, that moſt powerful and cruel monſter, armed with the authority of all the bad examples that are in it, will invite you with its pomps and vanities, tempt you with the evil practices of others, and frighten you with the perſecutions and reproaches of the wicked; and, as if all this were nothing, the devil, that cunning and old deceiver, will ſet upon you, and, according to his cuſtom with all that are newly converted, make his utmoſt efforts upon you, for forſaking his party.

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2. You are to preſuppoſe and conclude, you ſhall meet with all theſe difficulties and contradictions, that ſo, whenever they occur, you may not be ſurprized but reflect upon the advice of the wiſeman, when he ſays, *My ſon at your beginning to ſerve God live in fear, and prepare your ſoul againſt temptation.* Eccl. ii. 1. And therefore you muſt not imagine you are invited to entertainments, to ſports and paſtimes, but that you are called upon to take up the ſhield and ſpear, and to arm yourſelf for fight. For notwithſtanding the aſſurance we have of powerful aſſiſtance, it is not to be denied, but that there is always a great deal of difficulty at the beginning.

He that reſolves to ſerve God, is to preſuppoſe and to foreſee all this, that ſo nothing may ſeem ſtrange or unexpected to him; and to be perſuaded that the jewel he fights for, is of ſuch a value as to deſerve much more than he can give for the purchaſe of it. And leſt all theſe enemies ſhould diſcourage you, remember there are many more for you than againſt you: becauſe, though ſin raiſes up all theſe adverſaries, yet virtue comes in to your aſſiſtance with more powerful ſuccours. For you have God's grace againſt corrupt nature, God himſelf againſt the devil, good cuſtom againſt bad, many good ſpirits againſt many evil ones; you have the examples and exhortations of the ſaints, againſt the bad examples and perſecutions of the wicked, and againſt the delights and pleaſures of the world, you have the conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt. It is plain, therefore, that each of thoſe that are for you is ſtronger than his adverſary. For grace is certainly ſtronger than nature, God than the devil, the good angels more powerful than the bad, and ſpiritual delights and pleaſures incomparably more charming and more winning than ſenſual pleaſures.

THE SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

PART THE FIRST,

Which Treats of VICES, and of the REMEDIES to be applied againſt them.

CHAP. I.

Of the firm Reſolution a good Chriſtian is to make, never to commit any mortal Sin.

1. THESE two principles being preſuppoſed as the main foundations of this ſpiritual building, the firſt and chiefeſt thing which he that is ſeriouſly reſolved to give himſelf up to God's ſervice and to the ſtudy of virtue, ought to do, is to fix in his ſoul a ſincere reſolution never to commit any mortal ſin. For by this alone, we loſe the grace and friendſhip of our Lord, and with it many other favours and benefits. This is the chief baſis of a virtuous life; by this we are to keep ourſelves in God's favour, and to preſerve his friendſhip and the right we have to the kingdom of Heaven. In this conſiſts charity, and the ſpiritual life of the ſoul depends upon it. It is this makes men the children of God, the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and the living members of Jeſus Chriſt; and conſequently, as ſuch, partakers of all the privileges of the church. As long as the ſoul keeps this reſolution, ſhe remains in charity and in the ſtate of grace; but as ſoon as ever ſhe falls from it ſhe is immediately blotted out of

of the book of life, and put down into that of perdition, and baniſhed into the kingdom of darkneſs.

2. This matter being duly conſidered, it appears that, as all things, whether natural or artificial, are compoſed of ſubſtance and accidents, with this difference, that the ſubſtance always remains, though the accidents be changed; as a houſe is ſaid to be ſtill ſtanding, (when the carved work and painting is quite defaced) though not ſo perfect as it was at firſt; but when the houſe falls all fails. So the ſoul, as long as it ſtands firmly to this reſolution, ſtill retains the ſubſtance of virtue; but when once this fails all the ſtructure falls to the ground: the reaſon of it is, becauſe the whole being of a virtuous life conſiſts in charity, that is, in loving God above all things. And he loves God after this manner who hates mortal ſin above all things; there being nothing but this that can make a man loſe the love and friendſhip of God. So that as there is nothing more injurious than adultery to a marriage bed, there is nothing more prejudicial to and more deſtructive of a virtuous life than mortal ſin, becauſe it deſtroys charity, which maintains and nouriſhes this life.

3. This is the reaſon why all the martyrs willingly endured ſuch dreadful torments: for this cauſe they ſuffered themſelves to be burned, to be impaled alive, to be racked, to have their fleſh pulled off with pincers, and to be torn in pieces, rather than commit a mortal ſin, which would in a moment have deprived them of the friendſhip and grace of God. They knew that if they had ſinned mortally, they might have repented of their crime and have obtained pardon, as St. Peter did for denying our Saviour; and yet they rather choſe to undergo all the torments in the world, than to be ever ſo ſhort a ſpace out of God's favour.

4. We have three great examples of this ſort in three noble women; one of the Old Teſtament, the mother of ſeven ſons and two of the New, called Felicitas and Symphoroſa, who had alſo each of them ſeven ſons. Theſe holy women were all of them preſent at the ſufferings and martyrdoms of their own children, and were ſo far from being frightened at the lamentable ſight, when they beheld them torn in pieces before their faces, that, on the contrary, they exhorted and encouraged them to die bravely for the faith and ſervice of God; and gave up their own lives with them, with a great deal of courage and reſolution, for the ſame cauſe.

5 St. Jerom, in his Life of St. Paul, the firſt hermit, gives us an example (I am doubtful whether not preferable to theſe)

theſe) of a young man whom, after having tried all other means, the tyrants would have forced to offend God; and to this purpoſe, they laid him on his back naked upon a ſoft bed, under a ſhade of trees, in a very freſh and pleaſant garden, tying down his arms and his hands with ſilken cords, that he might neither fly nor defend himſelf: then they ſent a lewd woman to him, richly dreſſed, to uſe all the arts ſhe could think of to overcome his reſolution and conſtancy. What could the ſoldier of Chriſt do in this diſtreſs? What courſe could he take to avoid ſuch diſgrace, when he was naked and had his hands and feet tied? Yet the power of Heaven and the preſence of the Holy Ghoſt did not forſake him; for he was immediately inſpired to deliver himſelf from his preſent danger, by a ſtratagem more ſtrange and heroic than any we read of, either in the Greek or Roman hiſtorians. For out of the great fear he had of God, and out of the horror of ſin, he bit out his tongue with his teeth, the only part of him then at liberty, and ſpit it into the impudent woman's face; thus, by ſo ſtrange and unheard-of an action, terrifying and obliging her to fly, and at the ſame time cooling the natural heat of the fleſh by the pain he put it to. This is enough to let us ſee, in ſhort, to what a degree all the ſaints have hated and abhorred mortal ſin. I could here give you the examples of ſome perſons, who rolled themſelves quite naked amongſt briers and thorns; and of others who have flung themſelves into the ſnow, in the very depth of winter, to quench the fire of luſt, which the enemy had kindled in them.

6. He therefore that deſigns to walk in the ſame path, muſt endeavour to fix this reſolution deep in his ſoul, eſteeming the friendſhip of God more than all the treaſures of the world, and chuſing, when occaſion offers, to part freely with things of ſmall value for thoſe that are of ineſtimable worth. Let this be the very baſis of his life; it is to this all his actions are to tend; it is what he ought to beg earneſtly of God in all his prayers; it is for this he is to frequent the ſacraments; this is the fruit he muſt reap, by hearing of ſermons and reading of good books; it is the leſſon he is to learn from the form and beauty of the world, with all the creatures that are in it. This is the chief benefit he is to make of the paſſion of our Saviour, and of all the reſt of God Almighty's favours and graces, to wit, never to offend him to whom he is ſo infinitely indebted; and it is this holy fear and firm reſolution by which he is to meaſure his progreſs in virtue, looking upon himſelf

to have advanced ſo much the more or leſs, as he has been the more or leſs obſervant of his reſolution.

7. And as a man, that would drive a nail up to the head, is not content to give it three or four ſtrokes, but continues hammering till he has drove it in; ſo it is not enough to make this reſolution any how, but a man muſt endeavour every day to apply whatſoever he ſhall ſee, hear, read or meditate upon, to his farther advance in the love of God, and in a deteſtation of ſin; becauſe the greater progreſs he makes in this hatred, the more forward he advances in that love, and conſequently in all ſorts of virtue.

8. He is, for his greater confirmation in this deſign, to be thoroughly convinced, that if all the ill accidents and all the pains that ever have been in the world, from its creation to this very day, with all the torments that the damned ſuffer in hell, were put together into one ſcale, and mortal ſin into another, this would without doubt weigh down all the torments, as being a much greater evil, and by conſequence ſuch a one as deſerves more to be avoided than all theſe pains and torments; though the dreadful blindneſs and darkneſs of this Egypt makes men imagine theſe things to be quite different from what they are in effect. But after all, what wonder is it that neither the blind ſhould ſee ſo great an evil, nor the dead be ſenſible of ſo deep a wound, ſince it is impoſſible for the blind to ſee any thing though ever ſo great, or for the dead to feel any wound though it be mortal.

SECTION I.

9. The ſubject of this ſecond book being the doctrine of virtue, to which ſin is directly oppoſite, the firſt part of it ſhall be ſpent in treating of the horror we ought to have of it, and of ſuch particular remedies as may be applied to it; becauſe if we can but once root theſe bad weeds out of the ſoul, it will be no hard matter to ſet the plants of virtues in their places; whereof we will treat in the ſecond part. We will ſpeak here, not only of mortal but of venial ſins; not that theſe take away the life of the ſoul, but becauſe they weaken and diſpoſe it for death. And for this ſame reaſon we will here ſpeak of the ſeven *capital* or *deadly ſins*, which are the very heads and ſources of all others; not that they always happen to be mortal, but that they very often are ſo when a commandment of God or of the church is broken, or any thing done contrary to charity.

10. In

10. In this doctrine, he that finds himſelf powerfully tempted by any vice may find remedies for all his diſtempers. Some of them, it is true, are general againſt all kinds of ſins ſpoken of in the Memorial of a Chriſtian Life, where I have given fifteen or ſixteen remedies againſt ſin; others are particular and applicable only to particular ſins, as to pride, covetouſneſs, anger, and the like. Theſe are what we ſhall treat of at preſent, by applying to every peculiar vice its proper remedy, and by furniſhing thoſe perſons who are reſolved to fight againſt ſin with ſpiritual weapons.

11. But you muſt here carefully obſerve, that, for fighting of this battle, we have more need of eyes to ſee what is done, than of hands to fight or feet to run away. The eyes are the chief weapons man can uſe in this war, which is carried on, not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt the evil angels which are ſpiritual creatures. The reaſon of this is, becauſe the very firſt root of all ſin, is the error and deceit of the underſtanding, which counſels and directs the will; and therefore our adverſary's chief endeavour is to pervert the underſtanding. For if this be perverted, the will, which is governed by it, muſt neceſſarily go the ſame way. For the better effecting of this, they colour evil over with the appearance of good, and make vice paſs for virtue, and cover the temptation ſo cunningly that it appears to be neceſſity and reaſon, not a temptation. So that if, for example, they have a mind to tempt us by ambition, avarice, anger, or the deſire of revenge, they endeavour to make us believe it is highly reaſonable to deſire what we do, and that to do the contrary would be to act againſt reaſon. Thus they make reaſon ſerve as a cloak to the temptation, that ſo they may by this means the better deceive even thoſe who follow the dictates of reaſon. It is neceſſary therefore, upon this account, that a man ſhould have eyes to diſcover the hook which lies under the bait, and not to be deceived by the bare form and appearance of good.

12. It is alſo requiſite to have eyes here, to ſee the malice, the deformity, the danger, the loſſes, and all the other inconveniences which the vice we are tempted to perpetually carries along with it, that ſo we may keep our appetite in, and be afraid to taſte that which, if once taſted, will infallibly be death to us. For this reaſon the myſterious animals in Ezekiel, which are the figures of the ſaints, were full of eyes all over, though their other members were but ſingle, to give us to underſtand how neceſſary theſe ſpiritual eyes are to the ſervants of God, to ſecure them againſt the ſnares of vice,

Ezek.

Ezek. ii. This is the chief remedy we ſhall make uſe of upon this occaſion; to which we will join all others that may be thought any ways neceſſary, as will appear hereafter.

CHAP. II.

Remedies againſt Pride.

1. HAVING promiſed in this firſt part to treat of vices, and their different remedies, we will begin with theſe ſeven, which are called *capital*, becauſe they are the heads and ſources of all the reſt. For if we can but pluck up theſe ſeven vices (whence all others proceed) by the roots, the reſt, which have ſprung up from them, muſt of neceſſity periſh; as all the branches of a tree die when the root, from which they received the ſap that nouriſhed them, is cut up. This was the occaſion of Caſſian's taking ſo much pains in writing his eight books againſt theſe vices, (which has alſo been done by ſeveral other very grave authors) becauſe he was thoroughly convinced that if theſe enemies were defeated, none of the reſt would be able to make any reſiſtance.

2. The reaſon of it, as St. Thomas writes, is becauſe all ſins originally proceed from ſelf-love, for they are all committed through a deſire of ſome particular good this ſelf-love makes us covet. 1. 2. 9. 77. Part 4. From this love ſpring thoſe three branches which St. John ſpeaks of in his canonical epiſtle, to wit, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. which, to ſpeak plainer, are nothing elſe but the love of pleaſures, the love of riches, and the love of honour; becauſe from the firſt love proceed theſe three, and all others come from them: for from the love of pleaſures ariſe three capital vices, luxury, gluttony and ſloth. From the love of honour comes pride, and covetouſneſs from the love of riches. And as for the other two, anger and envy, they ſerve every one of theſe unlawful loves. For anger is cauſed by meeting with any obſtruction in the obtaining of what we deſire; and when another gets that which ſelf-love deſired for itſelf, then envy is excited. Since therefore theſe are the three univerſal roots of all evils from which theſe ſeven vices proceed, it follows of courſe that if we can but overcome theſe ſeven, all the others muſt be routed. We ought, for this reaſon, to employ all our ſtrength in fighting with

with theſe mighty giants, if we have a mind to ſubdue all thoſe other enemies which have taken the land of promiſe from us.

3. The firſt and moſt conſiderable of them is pride, which is an inordinate deſire of excelling. It is the common opinion of holy writers that this vice is the mother and queen of all the reſt; and for this reaſon, holy Tobias, amongſt much other good counſel which he gave his ſon, adviſed him particularly againſt this vice, ſaying, *Never permit any pride to rule over your thoughts, or over your diſcourſe; for our perdition took its beginning from it.* Job iv. 34. As often therefore as this peſtilential vice ſhall tempt you, you may defend yourſelf againſt it by the following conſiderations.

4. Firſt of all, conſider the dreadful puniſhment God inflicted on the bad angels for their pride and inſolence; they were flung headlong out of Heaven in a moment, and caſt into the bottomleſs pit of hell. Conſider how this vice darkened and obſcured him who but juſt before ſhone brighter than all the ſtars of Heaven, and made not only a devil, but even the worſt of devils, of him who before was not only an angel, but the prince of angels. If the angels were treated in this manner, what will become of you, who are but duſt and aſhes? For neither is God contrary to himſelf, nor is there with him any reſpect of perſons. Pride is as odious to him in an angel as in a man, and humility, on the other ſide, as acceptable. It was this gave occaſion to St. Auguſtine to ſay, "That humility makes angels of men, and that pride makes devils of angels." Tom. 12. ad Etras in ſemo. And St. Bernard for the ſame reaſon, ſays, "That pride humbles a perſon down from the higheſt degree to the loweſt. The angels, for being proud in Heaven, were caſt down into hell; and man, for being humble here upon earth, is raiſed above the ſtars of Heaven." Septem c. 2.

5. With this ſevere puniſhment inflicted upon pride, conſider the example which the Son of God has given you of an inconceivable humility, who has taken upon him a nature ſo much beneath his own for the love of you, and has for the ſame reaſon *been obedient to his Father, unto death, nay, even to the death of the croſs*, Phil. ii. 8. Baſe and miſerable man, let the example of your God here teach you obedience; learn from him, O earth! to humble yourſelf; learn from him, O duſt! to look upon yourſelf as nothing; learn, O Chriſtian! from your Lord and God, *who was meek and humble of heart*, Matth. xi. 29. If you think it below you to imitate the examples

amples of other men, do not think it below you to imitate that of God, who became man, as well to humble as to redeem us.

6. Caſt your eyes upon yourſelf, and you will there find motives enough of humility. Do but conſider what you were before you were born, what you are ſince you have been born, and what you are like to be after your death. Before your birth you were a filthy matter unworthy to be named, at preſent you are a dunghill covered with ſnow, and in a ſhort time will be meat for the worms. What have you now, O man, to be proud of? you whoſe birth is ſin, whoſe life is miſery, and whoſe end is rottenneſs and corruption! If the temporal riches you poſſeſs are the ſubject of your pride, ſtay but a moment, death will come and make us all equal. For as we are all born equal as to our natural condition, ſo we ſhall all die equal according to the common neceſſity of mankind, with this only difference, that they who have had the moſt here, will have the largeſt accounts to make up after death. Whereupon St. Chryſoſtom, ſpeaking to the ſame purpoſe, ſays, "Conſider ſeriouſly the graves of the dead, and find, if you can, the leaſt marks of all that ſplendour and magnificence they lived in, or of the riches and pleaſures they enjoyed. Tell me now, what is become of all their rich furniture and coſtly cloaths? where are all their ſports and paſtimes? what have they done with all their ſervants and attendants? their ſumptuous entertainments, their merriments, their jeſts and worldly mirth are now all over: Do but go near any one of their graves, and you will find nothing there now but duſt and aſhes, with worms and rotten bones." This therefore is the end the bodies are to come to, how tenderly and nicely ſoever they have been treated. And I wiſh there were no evil beyond or greater than this. But this is not all, there is ſomething follows that is much more to be apprehended; it is the dreadful tribunal of the Divine Juſtice, the ſentence which will be paſſed there, the weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, the never-dying worm, which bites and gnaws the conſciences, and the fire which ſhall never be extinguiſhed.

7. Conſider the danger of vain-glory, pride's daughter, of which St. Bernard ſpeaking, ſays, "It flies lightly, it enters lightly, but it wounds not lightly." Serm. 6. in Pſalm Qui habitat. For this reaſon you ought, whenever men commend or reſpect you, to conſider immediately whether you really have thoſe qualities they commend you for or not. For if you have not, you have no reaſon at all to be proud; but if you ſhould perhaps have them, ſay with the Apoſtle, *By the grace*

grace of God I am what I am. 1 Cor. xv. 10. So that you have no reaſon to be proud on that account, but, on the contrary, to humble yourſelf and to praiſe God, to whom you are indebted for all you have, that by this means you may make yourſelf not unworthy of what he has been pleaſed to beſtow on you; for it is certain that the reſpect which men pay you, and the reaſon for their doing ſo, comes from God; and therefore you rob God of as much honour as you appropriate to yourſelf. Can any ſervant be more unfaithful than he that ſteals his maſter's glory? Conſider farther, what a folly and madneſs it is to rate your worth and merit according to the opinion and eſteem of men, who have the liberty of turning the ſcale which way they pleaſe, of taking away in a ſhort time what they now give you, and of ſtripping you of the honour they at preſent afford you. If you build your reputation upon what they ſay of you, to-day perhaps you will be a great man, as mean to-morrow, and next day nothing at all; juſt as a company of inconſtant and changeable men ſhall think fit to talk of you. Your buſineſs therefore is, never to value yourſelf upon the commendations others give you, but only upon what you know of yourſelf. And though they ſhould cry you up to the very ſkies, hearken you at the ſame time to what your conſcience ſays to you, and be perſuaded, that you are better acquainted with yourſelf than other men are, who have only a diſtant view of you, and can judge of you by nothing elſe but by what they hear. Take no notice of what men ſay or think of you, but commit your honour and glory into God's hands; he is wiſe enough to lay it up for you, and faithful enough to give it you back again.

8. Conſider alſo, O ambitious man, what dangers the deſire you have of commanding others expoſes you to. For how ſhall you be able to command others, who have not yet learned o obey? What account ſhall you be able to give Almighty God of many others, when you are ſcarce able to anſwer for yourſelf? Conſider what a hazard you run, by adding to your own thoſe perſons ſins who are committed to your care; for they will be all put upon your account. For this reaſon the ſcripture ſays, *That thoſe who are the miniſters of juſtice ſhall have ſevere ſentence paſſed againſt them, and that the mighty ſhall be mightily tormented*, Sap. vi. 6, 7. Beſides, who is able to expreſs the cares and troubles thoſe perſons live in who have many others to look after? We have an excellent example hereof in a certain king, who, juſt as he was going to be crowned, took the crown in his hands before they placed it on

his

his head, and having looked ſtedfaſtly on it for a while, cried out, "O crown, much more rich than happy, if a man did but know thee thoroughly he would never ſtoop to take thee up, though he found thee lying on the ground."

9. Conſider once again, O proud man, that your pride is acceptable to nobody. It is not acceptable to God, becauſe he is your enemy; for *he reſiſts the proud, and gives grace to the humble.* 1 Pet. v. 5. It cannot but be odious to the humble, becauſe every body ſees what a horror they have of any thing that is proud and haughty; nor will thoſe, that are themſelves as proud as you, like it, becauſe they hate you on the very ſame account, that you value yourſelf, and can endure none that is greater than they are. And what is worſt of all, you will never be ſatisfied with yourſelf in this world, if you do but enter into yourſelf, and reflect upon your own vanity and folly; and you will have much leſs contentment in the next world, when you ſhall be condemned, in puniſhment of your pride, to eternal torments. God confirms this by the mouth of St. Bernard, when he ſays, "O man, if you were but thoroughly acquainted with yourſelf, you would be diſagreeable to yourſelf, and thereupon agreeable to me; but for want of knowing yourſelf, you are puffed up with pride, and therefore it is that I hate you." The time will come when you will neither pleaſe yourſelf nor me; you will not pleaſe me, becauſe of the crimes you have committed, nor yourſelf, becauſe of the torments you ſhall be condemned to for all eternity. There is none but the devil that approves of your pride; it was this changed him into a moſt hideous and deformed ſpirit, from a moſt glorious and beautiful angel; and therefore it is natural to him to be pleaſed when he ſees others like himſelf.

10. Another motive you may uſe for the humbling of yourſelf, is the conſideration of the ſmall ſervices you have done God, ſuch at leaſt as are ſincere and true, and conſequently the little favour you are to expect from him; for there are many vices hid under the appearance of virtue, and very often thoſe actions which are good of themſelves are ſpoiled by the pride we take in them; and what men imagine to be as bright as noonday, frequently proves to be dark as night before God. This moſt juſt judge makes another judgment of things than we do; and an humble ſinner is not ſo odious to him as a proud juſt man, though we cannot properly call him juſt who is proud. But after all, let us put the caſe that you have done ſome good works; do but call to mind the ill actions you have been guilty of, and you will find they far outweigh the other,

other, nay, perhaps you will find the good you have done has been ſo faulty and imperfect, that there will be much more reaſon to aſk pardon than to pretend to any reward for it. And therefore St. Auguſtine ſaid, "Woe to a virtuous life, if God ſhould lay aſide his mercy when he examines into it," St. Aug. L. 9. Cor. c. 13. becauſe it is not at all improbable that he may condemn it, for thoſe very things we thought would pleaſe him; for the evil actions we commit are entirely and purely evil, but the good we do are not always perfectly and abſolutely good, being frequently mixed with a great many imperfections. This duly conſidered will make you acknowledge, that it is far more reaſonable to fear than to value yourſelf upon your good works. Job, as holy as he was, dreaded it, when he ſaid, *I know, O God, that thou doſt not ſpare him that ſins, and therefore I was afraid of all my works*, Job ix. 28.

SECTION.

Of ſome other more particular Remedies againſt Pride.

11. But becauſe the knowledge of a man's ſelf is the chief foundation of humility, ſo that of pride is a man's ignorance of himſelf; whoſoever has a mind to be truly humble muſt endeavour to acquire this knowledge, and by this means he will know how to humble himſelf. For how can he chuſe but have a mean opinion of himſelf, when, looking into his own breaſt without partiality by the light of truth, he finds himſelf full of ſins, defiled all over with the dregs of carnal pleaſures, under a thouſand miſtakes and errors, ſcared with a thouſand idle frights and fancies, intangled in a thouſand perplexities, preſſed down by the weight of a mortal body, ſo forward to all kind of evil, and ſo backward to any thing that is good? So that if you but examine yourſelf with due care and attention, you will be eaſily convinced that you have nothing at all in you to be proud of.

12. But there are ſome who, though looking into themſelves they are humbled, yet they grow proud by looking upon others, finding themſelves upon compariſon better than they. Thoſe who are puffed up on this account ought to conſider, that if they are better than others in ſome things, there are many other things in which, did they perfectly underſtand themſelves, they would ſee thoſe others are better than they. Why therefore ſhould you have a good opinion of yourſelf,

and deſpiſe your neighbour for being more abſtemious or more laborious than he is? when, though you excel him in theſe virtues, he is perhaps more humble, more prudent, more patient, or more charitable than you? So that it is your buſineſs to look not ſo much upon what you have, as upon what you want, and to take more notice of thoſe virtues you obſerve in others, than of thoſe you ſee in yourſelf; by this means you will preſerve your humility, and excite and increaſe in your ſoul a deſire of perfection. Whereas if you look only upon what you have yourſelf, and what others want, you will have a better opinion of yourſelf than of them, and will grow tepid and idle in the ſtudy of virtue. The reaſon is plain, becauſe you will imagine, upon comparing yourſelf with others, that you are ſomething, and ſo you will come by degrees to be pleaſed with the ſtate you find yourſelf in, and will not care for going any farther.

13. If, after any good actions, you diſcover any inclination to think well of yourſelf, and to take a pride in what you have done, your buſineſs then will be to watch more carefully over yourſelf, for fear you ſhould ſpoil and loſe all the merit of it, by pride and vain-glory, the very bane and beſt of all that is good. You ought to be ſo far from attributing any good to your own merits, that you are, on the contrary, to thank God for all, and ſuppreſs your pride with thoſe words of St. Paul: *What have you that you have not received? And if you have received what you have, why do you grow proud as if you had not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. You ſhould endeavour to conceal all thoſe good works you do which are not of duty, but for your farther advance in perfection, unleſs the ſtate you are in requires they ſhould be more public: You ſhould not ſo much as let your left hand know what your right hand does, becauſe we are more apt to be proud of the good works we do openly than of others. As ſoon as you perceive your heart but beginning to ſwell, you are immediately to make uſe of the remedy, that is, to call to mind your ſins, but particularly one or more of the moſt heinous of them; and thus, like the phyſicians, you will expel one poiſon by another: follow the example of the peacock, look upon that which is moſt deformed in you, and you will ſoon remove the very occaſions of your vanity.

14. The greater you are the more humble you ought to be, for it is no great matter to be humble, if you are a mean perſon, but if you are a perſon of honour and quality, and yet are thus diſpoſed, you will acquire a very excellent and great virtue,

virtue, becauſe humility in the midſt of honour is an honour to honour itſelf, and one dignity added to another; but if you have no humility, your honour and dignity will fall to the ground.

15. If you deſire to acquire the virtue of humility, follow the part of humiliation, for you will never be humble if you cannot endure to be humbled; and though there are ſeveral perſons who pretend to be humble, when in reality they are far from being ſo, it is certainly true, "That the way to humility (as St. Bernard ſays) is humiliation; as patience is the way to peace, and ſtudy to learning." St. Bern. ad Fratres de monte Dei. Obey God therefore with all humility, and according to St. Peter's advice, *ſubmit to every creature for the love of God*, 1 Pet. ii. 13.

16. St. Bernard would have us always keep three ſorts of fears in our hearts; one when we are in the ſtate of grace, another when we are out of it, and the third when we recover grace again. "Be afraid (ſays he) when you are in grace, leſt you ſhould do ſomething unworthy of it: be afraid, when you have loſt grace, becauſe without it you are deprived of the guard that watched over you to ſecure you: be afraid too if, after having once loſt it, you ſhould ever recover it again, that you may not be ſo unhappy as to loſe it a ſecond time." St. Bern. Serm. 4. in Cantic. Do but keep yourſelf continually in theſe apprehenſions, and you will never preſume upon your own ſtrength and virtue, being always thus full of the fear of God.

17. Suffer all your perſecutions with patience, for it is the bearing of injuries and affronts in this manner, that ſhews us whether a man be truly humble or not. Never deſpiſe thoſe who are poor and in diſtreſs; our neighbours miſery ſhould rather excite us to compaſſion than to a contempt of them. Be not too curious and expenſive in your dreſs, for it is impoſſible a man's heart ſhould be always humble when he is perpetually ſolicitous about coſtly apparel, nay, he that is ſo, cannot but make it too much his buſineſs and ſtudy to pleaſe men; for a man would never take ſuch pains to dreſs himſelf if he thought nobody would take any notice of him. But whilſt you endeavour to avoid this extreme, have a care at the ſame time of running into the oppoſite, of going meaner than your ſtate and condition requires, otherwiſe you will meet with vain-glory whilſt you are running from it, as ſeveral perſons do, who then ſeek moſt for commendations when they pretend moſt to deſpiſe it; thus cunningly ſtudying to be ad-

mired, under the pretence of running from it. You ought not to diſdain mean and baſe employs, for a man that is truly humble will be ſo far from refuſing ſuch, as thinkng them beneath him, that he will rather ſeek after them with all the cheerfulneſs imaginable, becauſe he is baſe and vile in his own eyes.

CHAP. III.

Remedies againſt Covetouſneſs.

1. COVETOUSNESS is an inordinate deſire of riches; and therefore not only he that ſteals from others, but he that paſſionately covets what is another man's, or is too ſolicitous in keeping his own, is properly accounted covetous. The Apoſtle condemned this vice, when he ſaid, *They who deſire to be rich fall into temptation, and into the ſnares of the devil, and into a great many unprofitable and hurtful deſires, which ſink men down into deſtruction and perdition; for covetouſneſs is the root of all evil,* 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. He could not have exaggerated the malignity of this vice in more proper terms; for this gives us to underſtand, that he who is ſubject to this vice is a ſlave to all others.

2. Whenever therefore you are ſet upon by this vice, you may arm yourſelf againſt it with the following conſiderations. —Conſider, in the firſt place, O covetous man, that your Lord and your God, when he came down from Heaven upon earth, did not deſire to poſſeſs ſuch riches as thoſe you ſeek after; on the contrary, he had ſuch an extraordinary love for poverty, that he choſe to take fleſh of a poor and humble virgin, not of a rich and noble queen. After he was born he would not live in great palaces, nor lie in a chamber well furniſhed, nor in a ſoft bed, but in a baſe and poor manger, and upon a little ſtraw. Luke ii. 7. Beſides this, he had a particular love for poverty during his whole life, and deſpiſed riches, ſince he choſe poor fiſhermen for his ambaſſadors, and apoſtles, and not princes or perſons of great quality. What greater abuſe then can there be than for a baſe worm to deſire to be rich, when the ſovereign Lord of all creatures became ſo poor, for his ſake?

3. Conſider again the vileneſs of your own heart, ſince you are willing, for a little intereſt, to throw away your ſoul, which

which was created to the likeneſs of God, and redeemed by his blood, in compariſon of which all the world is nothing. God would not have given his life for the whole world, and yet he laid it down for man's ſoul; this ſoul therefore muſt be of a much greater value than the whole world. It is not ſilver, nor gold, nor precious ſtones, that are the true riches, but virtue, the inſeparable companion of a good conſcience. Lay aſide the falſe opinion and judgment of men, and you will ſee that your ſilver and gold is nothing but a little earth, which receives all its worth and value from the erroneous judgment of men. Will you, who are a Chriſtian, and who are called to the enjoyment of greater goods, ſet ſuch an eſteem upon that which all the Heathen philoſophers contemned and ſlighted, as to make yourſelf its ſlave? for, as St. Jerom ſays, "He that looks after his riches like a ſlave, is a ſlave to them; but he that ſhakes off this yoke, poſſeſſes them as lord and maſter." Hieron. in c. 6. Matt.

4. Conſider alſo that, as our Saviour ſays, *nobody can ſerve two maſters, God and mammon*, Matth. vi. 24. and that it is impoſſible for a man to contemplate God whilſt he is running open-mouthed after worldly goods; he that loves temporal delights and comforts muſt not expect to poſſeſs the ſpiritual; nor is there any poſſibility of joining falſe and true things together, high and low, eternal and temporal, ſpiritual and carnal, ſo as to enjoy them both at once. Conſider that the more ſucceſs you meet with in your worldly concerns, the more miſerable you are like to be, becauſe of the occaſions it gives you of truſting too much to this falſe happineſs you enjoy. Oh! that you did but know what miſery attends this poor ſucceſs! The very deſire which proceeds from the love of riches is a much greater torment than the poſſeſſion of them can be a delight and pleaſure, becauſe it entangles the ſoul in many temptations, it engages it in many cares, invites it with its empty delights, excites it to ſin, and diſturbs its reſt and quiet: beſides all this, there is no getting of riches without pains and labour, there is no keeping of them without ſolicitude and care, and there is no loſing of them without much grief and vexation; but what is worſt of all, they are ſcarce ever to be heaped up without offending God; for it is a common ſaying, "That a rich man is either a wicked man, or elſe a wicked man's heir."

5. Conſider what a folly it is to be continually deſiring thoſe things, which it is certain can never ſatisfy your wiſh, though they were all to be joined together; on the contrary, they

they do but provoke and raiſe your deſire the more, as a dropſical man, the more he drinks ſtill the drier he is; becauſe, let your poſſeſſions be ever ſo large, you will be always coveting what you have not, and continually gaping after more. So that whilſt your heart is unhappily running after the things of this world, it tires itſelf without ever being ſatisfied, it drinks and yet cannot quench its thirſt, becauſe it takes no notice of what it has, and thinks of nothing but how to get more; and what is ſtill worſe, that which it is already poſſeſſed of, cannot give it ſo much eaſe and contentment as that which it cannot obtain gives it diſturbance and trouble, and whilſt you are filling your coffers with gold you fill your heart full of air and ſmoke. St. Auguſtine had a great deal of reaſon to be aſtoniſhed at this kind of proceeding, and therefore he ſaid, "How is it poſſible that men ſhould be ſo inſatiable in their deſires, when even brute creatures obſerve a bound and meaſure in theirs? For they never ſeek their prey but when they are hungry, and as ſoon as ever they are ſatisfied they give over. There is nothing but the covetouſneſs of rich men that knows no limits, it is perpetually praying and yet never ſatisfied." St. Aug. Serm. 25. de Verbis Domini.

6. Conſider again, where there are great riches there are many to conſume them, many to ſquander or ſteal them away. What can the richeſt man in the world get by all his riches, more than what is neceſſary for the ſupport of life? You may, if you will, put all your truſt in God, and caſt yourſelf wholly upon his providence, be free from this care, becauſe he never forſakes thoſe that rely on him; for he that has ſubjected man to the neceſſity of eating, will never let him die for want of meat. How can it be thought, that God ſhould take no notice of man, when he feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, Matth. vi. 26, 28. and this eſpecially when ſo little ſerves for the ſatisfying of nature? Life is ſhort, and death is continually advancing apace; what need is there then of providing ſo much for ſo ſhort a journey? Why will you load yourſelf with ſo many riches, when the leſs you have the more free you will be, and the better able to walk? and when you ſhall come to your journey's end you will find no worſe entertainment for being poor, than thoſe that ſhall come hither richer fraught; but you will be leſs troubled for what you leave, and will have the leſs to anſwer for. Whereas the rich, when they come to their journey's end, will be grieved to the heart to leave thoſe heaps of gold they

they ſo entirely loved, and will be accountable for what they poſſeſſed, to the great danger of their ſouls.

7. Conſider further, O covetous man, for whom you heap up all thoſe riches, ſince it is a plain caſe that you are to go as naked out of the world as you came into it, Job i. 21. You were born poor in this life, and ſo you will be forced to leave it. This is what you are frequently to reflect upon. For as St. Jerom ſays, "It is an eaſy matter for him that thinks often of death, to deſpiſe the goods of this life." Ad Paulinum in Prologo Bibliæ. At the very moment of your death you muſt take your leave of all your temporal goods, and carry nothing away with you but the good or evil works you have done during your life; then you will be deprived of all heavenly goods if, whilſt you lived, you took but little notice of them, and ſpent all your time and pains in procuring the temporal: for then all you have will be divided into three parts; your body will be given to the worms, your ſoul to the devils, and your riches will fall into the hands of your heirs, who will perhaps be either ungrateful, extravagant or wicked. It would be better for you, according to the advice of our Saviour, to diſtribute your goods amongſt the poor betimes, that you may have them carried by them before you, as great men have when they travel, Luke xvi. 9. For what greater madneſs is there than to leave your goods where you ſhall never go back to fetch them, and not to ſend them where you are to live forever?

8. Conſider farther, that this Sovereign Governor of the world, like a diſcreet maſter of a family, diſpoſes of his goods, and the charges under him, in ſuch a manner as that ſome he conſtitutes to look after the reſt, and others he appoints to be ſubject to thoſe whom he ſets over them; ſome he has ordered to diſtribute what is neceſſary, and others to receive the diſtributions. And ſince you are one of thoſe who are to diſtribute to others what remains over and above your own neceſſary expences, can you imagine that you are allowed to keep that for yourſelf which has been given you for ſeveral others? For, as St. Baſil ſays, "the bread you lock up belongs to the poor, the cloaths you hide are for thoſe who have none to put on, and the money you hoard up is to be diſtributed amongſt thoſe that want it." Hom. de diverſis. Therefore aſſure yourſelf that you have robbed as many perſons as you have neglected to aſſiſt with what you had to ſpare, whenever it was in your power to do it. Conſider then that the goods God has entruſted you with are the remedies of human miſeries, not the occaſions of a bad life.

life. Be ſure then, when you are in the midſt of your proſperity, that you do not forget the author of it, nor make the means you have of aſſiſting your neighbour in his diſtreſs the ſubject of your pride and vanity: do not therefore love the place of your baniſhment more than your own country: do not make a burthen of the proviſions and neceſſaries for your journey: do not prefer the light of the moon before that of noon-day; nor change the ſuccours of this life into the inſtruments of everlaſting death. Be content with the condition God has placed you in, and think of what the Apoſtle ſays, *Having enough for to feed and cloath ourſelves with, we are content therewith*, 1 Tim. vi. 8. For, as St. Chryſoſtom ſays, "A ſervant of God ought not to dreſs himſelf out of vanity, or to indulge and pleaſe his fleſh, but only to ſupply neceſſity and want." *Firſt ſeek the kingdom of God and his juſtice, and all theſe things ſhall be added to you*, Matth. vi. 33. For God will never deny you ſuch ſmall things as thoſe are, when he is willing to give you the greateſt you are capable of receiving.

9. Remember it is not poverty, but the love of it, that is a virtue. Thoſe who are voluntarily poor are like our Saviour himſelf, who, as rich as he was, made himſelf poor for our ſakes. But thoſe who are poor and cannot help it, make a virtue of neceſſity when they bear their poverty with patience, and contemn thoſe riches which they have not. And as they who are poor conform themſelves by their poverty to Jeſus Chriſt, ſo they who are rich reform themſelves by their alms for Jeſus Chriſt. For we ſee that not only the poor ſhepherds had the happineſs to find Chriſt, but that wiſe and great men came to him, and made him preſents of their riches and treaſures. Do you therefore, who have an eſtate large enough to do it, give alms to the poor, for it is God himſelf that receives what you give them, and look upon it for certain, that what you beſtow upon them now will be laid up for you in Heaven, where you are to live for all eternity: but if you ſhould hide your riches in this world, you muſt not expect to find any thing there, where you have not laid it up. With what juſtice then can we call thoſe things goods which man cannot carry along with him, and which he unwillingly parts with? But ſpiritual goods, on the contrary, are what we may truly call ſuch, becauſe they do not leave their maſter, even at his death, nor can they be taken from a man without his own conſent.

SECTION.

SECTION.

That no Body ought to detain another Man's Goods.

10. A word or two of advice here, upon the danger there is in detaining other men's goods, will not be amiſs. To which purpoſe you are to underſtand, that it is not only a ſin to take what belongs to another, but even to detain it againſt the owner's will. And it is not enough to have a deſign of reſtoring it hereafter, if a man is able to do it now, becauſe he is not only obliged to make reſtitution, but to make it immediately. It is true, that if he cannot do it preſently, or is ſo poor that he cannot do it at all, he is not in ſuch a caſe obliged either to the one or to the other, becauſe God does not oblige man to any thing that is impoſſible.

11. There is no need of any more words to prove what I have ſaid than thoſe of St. Gregory, in his letter to a gentleman of his acquaintance. "Remember, ſir, (ſays he) that the riches gotten by unlawful ways are to remain here, and the ſins you have been guilty of in acquiring them are to go along with you. What greater folly can you commit than to leave the gain here, and to carry the loſs with you where you are going? to let another take the pleaſure whilſt you undergo the torment, and to oblige yourſelf to ſuffer in the next world for that which others are to have the benefit of in this?

12. "Beſides, can there be greater madneſs than to look leſs to yourſelf than to your eſtate? to loſe your ſoul rather than part with your money, and to expoſe your body to the danger of being run through, rather than part with your coat? This is ſomething like Judas, who, for a little money, ſold juſtice, grace, and his own ſoul. If, in fine, it is true, as without doubt it is, that you muſt make reſtitution at the hour of death, if you deſign to ſave your ſoul, how can you ſhew yourſelf a greater fool than to continue here ſo long in ſin, to ſleep in ſin, to awake in ſin, to confeſs in ſin, to communicate in ſin, and to loſe what a man in ſin loſes, which is worth much more than all the riches of the world, whilſt, at the ſame time, you are ſo ſtrictly obliged to pay off whatever you owe? We cannot look upon him as a man of ſound judgment or reaſon that will run ſuch hazards as theſe."

13. Endeavour therefore to pay what you owe to the utmoſt farthing, and let not any one ſuffer for want of your doing ſo, Deut. xxiv. Tob. iv. Let not the labourer's toil and ſweat go unrewarded; let him not run up and down and loſe his time

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in ſeeking after his wages, and take more pains in ſoliciting for them, when due, than he did in earning of them, as ill paymaſters often do: If you be made an executor, do not defraud the ſouls departed of the ſuccour and help that is due to them, leſt they ſhould ſuffer their torments longer upon account of your neglect; for all will fall heavy at laſt upon your own ſoul. If you are indebted to your ſervants, endeavour to make all clear and even with them, that ſo you may diſengage yourſelf; or, at leaſt, agree with them upon ſuch terms whilſt you live, that there may be no diſputes nor differences after your death. Whatſoever you can perform of your own will leave not to executors, for how can you imagine, if you are ſo careleſs in your own concerns, that other perſons will be more diligent in concerns which are none of their own?

14. Endeavour to be indebted to no man, for by that means you will ſleep quietly, enjoy peace of conſcience, an eaſy life and a calm death. The means to obtain all this is, to put a ſtop to your irregular deſires and appetites, not to do every thing you have a mind to do; to ſee that your expences do not exceed your eſtate, but to moderate them according to your ability, and not according to your own deſires, that ſo you may always keep out of debt. For they are our unruly appetites which make us run into debt; moderation is worth more than a great eſtate and large revenues. Look upon thoſe as the chief and the only true riches which the Apoſtle reckons as ſuch, when he ſays, *Piety with content* (in what condition God puts us in) *are great gains*, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Men would always live in peace, did not they deſire to be greater and happier in this world than God would have them; but when they aſpire to go beyond this bound, they muſt of neceſſity loſe a great deal of their peace and quiet, for we muſt not expect that ſhould prove ſucceſsful which is not according to God Almighty's will.

CHAP. IV.

Remedies againſt Impurity.

1. IMPURITY is an inordinate deſire of unlawful pleaſures. It is one of the moſt common, the moſt furious, and moſt dangerous vices in its attacks; which gave St. Auguſtine

guſtine reaſon to ſay, "That of all the encounters a Chriſtian meets with, thoſe in which chaſtity is engaged are the moſt difficult, for there the engagements are frequent, and the victories rare." S. Aug. de honeſtate Mulierum.

2. As often therefore as you perceive yourſelf ſet upon by this filthy vice, you may oppoſe it with the following conſiderations: Conſider firſt, that this vice not only defiles the ſoul, which the Son of God has purified by his blood, but that it alſo ſtains the body in which Chriſt's moſt ſacred body reſides, as in a holy ſhrine. Now, if it be ſo great a crime to defile any material temple dedicated to God, what muſt it be to profane this in which God himſelf dwells? For this reaſon the Apoſtle ſays, *Fly from the ſin of fornication, my brethren, becauſe whatſoever ſin a man ſhall commit, it is out of the body: but he who falls into fornication, ſins againſt his own body,* 1 Cor. vi. 18. by profaning and defiling it with the ſin of the fleſh. Conſider again, that there is no committing of this ſin, without an injury and ſcandal to as many others as are accomplices with you in your crime. Nothing lies ſo heavy upon the conſcience, at the hour of death, as this ſin does. For if God, in the Old Law, required life for life, and tooth for tooth, what returns can a man make God for the deſtroying of ſo many ſouls? And what ſatisfaction can he give for that which God Almighty purchaſed at the price of his blood? Exod. xxi. 24.

3. Conſider that this deceitful vice, though it begins in pleaſure, produces nothing but bitterneſs and ſorrow at the end. It is eaſy to be drawn into it, but nothing harder than to get free from it again. For this reaſon the Wiſe Man ſaid, *That a whore is a deep ditch, and a ſtrange woman is a narrow pit,* Prov. xiii. So that as eaſy as it is to fall into it, it is no ſuch eaſy matter to get out again. For no vice ſurprizes men more eaſily, becauſe it appears ſo delightful and charming at the beginning, but after they are once entangled in it, have knit a ſort of friendſhip, and laid aſide all modeſty, what means can ſerve to reclaim them from it? For this reaſon it is juſtly compared to a fiſherman's weel, which has the entrance wide, but the way out ſo narrow that it is almoſt impoſſible for the fiſh, when once they are in, to get out again. By this you may underſtand what a multitude of ſins are the conſequence of this one; for it is plain that, during the whole time a man has been engaged in it, he cannot but have offended God an infinite number of times, by thoughts, actions and deſires.

4. Conſider

4. Conſider how many other evils this bewitching plague brings along with it. For, in the firſt place, it robs a man of his reputation, which is the deareſt of all things we can poſſeſs in this world, for no vice whatever is ſo diſreputable and infamous as this is. Nor is this all, for it impairs ſtrength, decays beauty, deſtroys the good temper of body, is prejudicial to health, and cauſes many foul and loathſome diſtempers; it blaſts the gaiety, ſteals the freſhneſs of youth before its time, and brings on an infamous old age too faſt upon us; it dulls the wit, clogs the underſtanding, and makes it in a manner merely brutal; it takes a man off from all honourable employs and virtuous exerciſes, and buries him in the mud and filth of this baſe pleaſure, ſo that he can neither think, nor talk, nor treat of any thing, but what is baſe and filthy; it makes youth fooliſh and infamous, and old age unhappy and abominable. Nor is it content with all this diſorder, which it cauſes in a man's own perſon, it puts all his affairs and concerns into no leſs confuſion. For though a man be ever ſo rich or wealthy, this one ſin of impurity will run it all out in a very ſhort time. The belly muſt come in for its ſhare, and help to deſtroy and devour what it can. For thoſe men that are given to the ſins of the fleſh are for the moſt part gluttons and drunkards, and ſo ſquander away what they have in feaſting and fine cloaths. Beſides, women think they have never enough of jewels, coſtly apparel, and other expenſive toys, which they love much better than they do thoſe very gallants that give them. We have an example of this in the prodigal ſon, who ſpent all his patrimony after this manner, Luke. xv

5. Conſider farther, that the more you indulge yourſelf in carnal pleaſures, the leſs ſatisfaction you will find in them. For this delight is ſo far from ſatiating, that it ſtill creates an appetite, becauſe the love of man for woman, or of woman for man, never dies, but though it happen to be a little ſmothered in embers will break out into flames again. Conſider how ſhort and fleeting this pleaſure is, whereas the puniſhment due to it will laſt for all eternity. So that it is a moſt unequal exchange to give the peace of a good conſcience in this life, and eternal glory in the next, beſides purchaſing everlaſting torments for a filthy pleaſure, of a moment's laſting. This it was made St. Gregory ſay, "The delight laſts but for a moment, but the torments laſts for ever."

6. Conſider the price and value of virginal purity, which is loſt by this vice, becauſe they, who are virgins, begin even in this life to live like angels, and the brightneſs of their ſouls

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makes them reſemble the heavenly ſpirits; becauſe, "to live in the fleſh without doing the works of the fleſh, is more an angelical than a human virtue." S. Bern. in Nat. Virg. St. Jerom ſays, "it is virginity which reſembles the eſtate of immortal glory in this place, and during this time of mortality; it is it alone which follows the cuſtoms of the heavenly Jeruſalem, where there is no ſuch thing as betrothing or marrying, and by this means gives men a proof, whilſt they are upon earth, of the converſation they are to have in Heaven." S. Hier. to. 9. & 14. de Virginitatis laude. For this reaſon there is a particular reward in Heaven for virgins; of whom St. John ſays, in his Apocalypſe, *Theſe are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins, and follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, Apoc. xiv. 14. For ſince they have had the advantage in this world over the reſt of mankind, of imitating Chriſt in his virginal purity, they ſhall therefore have a freer acceſs to him in the next, and the purity of their bodies ſhall give them a particular happineſs and joy.

7. Nor is it the only effect of this virtue, to make thoſe who poſſeſs it like Chriſt himſelf, but it makes them living temples of the Holy Ghoſt; for as this Divine lover of purity abhors nothing ſo much as the ſin of the fleſh, ſo he no where ſo willingly makes his abode as in pure and chaſte ſouls. Wherefore the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, had ſuch eſteem and love for virginity, as to work the miracle of being born of a virgin mother. Do you, who have already loſt your virginity, after once ſuffering ſhipwreck dread dangers you have run through. And ſince you would not preſerve that gift of Nature entire, endeavour now at leaſt to repair the loſs, and turning to God after ſin, employ yourſelf ſo much the more in good works, by how much you are ſenſible your evil actions have deſerved puniſhment. "For, (as St. Gregory ſays) it often happens, that a ſoul which, if it had remained in a ſtate of innocence, would have been more tepid and careleſs, becomes after ſin more diligent and fervorous." S. Greg. in Paſtoral. Par. 1. And ſince God, notwithſtanding the many ſins you have committed, has yet preſerved you, commit not any thing again which may oblige him to puniſh you, both for what is paſt and for the preſent, leſt your laſt crime ſhould be much worſe than your former.

8. With theſe and the like conſiderations a man is to prepare and arm himſelf againſt this vice; and theſe are the firſt remedies we preſcribe againſt it.

SECTION

SECTION.

Of other more particular Remedies againſt Impurity.

9. Beſides theſe general remedies againſt this vice, there are ſeveral others more particular and more ſovereign, of which it is requiſite we ſhould ſpeak. The firſt is, to reſiſt the very firſt motions of it; it is an advice we have frequently given in other places; for if we do not beat this enemy off as ſoon as ever he ſets upon us, he immediately grows ſtronger and more vigorous; becauſe, according to St. Gregory, "when once the irregular deſire of pleaſure gets the better of the heart, it will not give it time to think of any thing elſe, but how to enjoy its delights." L. 7. Moral. c. 12. We muſt, for this reaſon, reſiſt the beginning, by not giving admittance to any carnal thoughts; for as fire is nouriſhed and kept in by wood, ſo our thoughts increaſe and inflame our deſires, which, if they are good, kindle the fire of charity, and if bad, that of impurity.

10. Beſides all this, you muſt keep a ſtrict guard upon all your ſenſes; but above all, have a care of looking on any thing that has the leaſt danger in it: For a man often looks upon a thing without any ill deſign, yet the ſoul is wounded by a glance of the eye. And becauſe the caſting of a look inconſiderately upon women, may either quite bend or at leaſt weaken his conſtancy that caſts it; therefore the author of Eccleſiaſticus gives us this advice: *Caſt not your eyes through the corners of the city, nor through the ſtreets or public places; turn away your eyes from a woman that is well dreſſed, and behold not her beauty.* Holy Job's example upon this occaſion ſhould ſuffice, who, notwithſtanding his extraordinary ſanctity, never neglected, as he aſſures us himſelf, to ſet a watch over his eyes, not relying upon himſelf, or his long practice and exerciſe of virtue, Job xxxi. 1. But if this example alone will not do, let us ſet that of David before us, and we ſhall find that he, though a very holy man, and after God's own heart, by looking curiouſly upon a woman, fell into three moſt grievous ſins, viz. murder, ſcandal and adultery, 2 Reg. xi.

11. Nor are you to be leſs careful in keeping your ears from hearing of any thing that is obſcene and unchaſte; or if at any time you ſhould hear ſuch kind of diſcourſe, let your looks ſhew that you are not pleaſed with it; for if a man once takes delight in hearing of a thing, he will be eaſily wrought upon to act it. You muſt alſo keep your tongue from ſpeaking filthy words,

words, becauſe, as St. Paul ſays, *Evil communications corrupt good manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 13. A man's diſcourſe diſcovers his inclinations and affections, becauſe it is the touchſtone of the heart, and what this is full of, that the tongue generally ſpeaks out.

12. Endeavour to have your heart always entertained with good thoughts, and your body always employed in ſome good exerciſe. "For (as St. Bernard ſays) the devils always put bad thoughts into an idle ſoul, to keep it in employ, that ſo it may not ceaſe to think ill, though it ceaſes to do ill." S. Bern. de doct. domo. c. 40.

13. It will be very proper in all temptations, but eſpecially in this, to repreſent to yourſelf your guardian angel and the devil your accuſer, for both of them really take notice of all you do, and give an account thereof to the ſame All-ſeeing Judge. If this be true (as there is no doubt to be made of it) how can you dare to commit ſo baſe and ſo deteſtable a crime, which you would bluſh to do before the meaneſt man in the world, in the ſight of your guardian, of your accuſer, and of your judge? Reflect alſo how terrible the Divine judgment is, and how dreadful the flames of everlaſting torments. For as one nail drives out another, ſo the apprehenſion we have of one puniſhment is overcome by the fear of a greater; and ſo the fire of luſt is often extinguiſhed by reflecting upon that of hell. Beſides all this, avoid as much as poſſibly you can the diſcourſing alone with any woman, whoſe age may give the leaſt ſuſpicion; for, according to St. Chryſoſtom, "our adverſary ſets upon men and women with more boldneſs and vigour, when he ſees them alone; and the tempter will come with much more aſſurance, when there is no fear of any one's correcting them for their diſorders." S. Chryſoſt. Serm. contra Concubinarios, Tom. 5. It is for this reaſon very adviſable that you would never converſe with a woman without ſome companion, for being alone is a great incitement and temptation to do any thing that is wicked. Do not truſt your own virtue, no not after the practice of many years, for you know how the old judges were inflamed with the love of Suſanna, after having ſeen her ſeveral times alone in her garden, Dan. xiv. Avoid the company of all women whatever that may give any ſuſpicion, becauſe the very ſight of them is prejudicial to the heart, their words charm it, their converſation inflames it, their touch provokes it; in fine, there is nothing about them that is not a ſnare to thoſe that keep them company. For this reaſon St. Gregory ſays, "Thoſe who have conſecrated

ſecrated their bodies to chaſtity, ſhould not venture to live in the ſame houſe with women; for a man ought not to think that the fire of his heart is quite put out, as long as he has any heat in his body." L. 1. Dialog. c. 7.

14. Have a care how you receive any preſents, viſits, or letters from women; for all theſe are ſo many chains to intangle the poor heart, and ſo many blaſts to blow up the fire of evil deſires, when all the flame is quite out. If you have any affection for any holy and chaſte woman, love her in your ſoul, without troubling yourſelf about viſiting or converſing familiarly with her. Now, becauſe the whole management of this buſineſs conſiſts particularly in avoiding theſe occaſions, I will give you two examples very pertinent to the matter in hand, related by St. Gregory in his Dialogues. "There was a certain prieſt, in the province of Myſia, who governed a church committed to his care with a great deal of piety, and in the fear of God. There was in the ſame place a very virtuous woman, who looked to the church furniture and ornaments. The good prieſt loved this woman as entirely as if ſhe had been his ſiſter, but at the ſame time was as much afraid of her as if ſhe had been his enemy; ſo that he never permitted her to come near him, upon any account whatever, and removed all occaſion of familiarity or converſation with her. As it is uſual for holy men to ſeparate themſelves even from ſuch things as are lawful, that they may be at a greater diſtance from ſuch as are unlawful: And for this reaſon he would never let her ſerve him in any of his neceſſities. The holy man being very old, for he had been a prieſt above forty years, was taken ſo violently ill that he was juſt at death's door; as he lay in this condition, this virtuous woman came to his bedſide, and put her ear to his noſtrils, to know whether he was dead. The dying man perceiving it was offended, and cried out as loud as poſſible he could, ſaying, 'Get you hence, woman, get you hence, for the embers are not quite extinguiſhed yet, therefore take away the ſtraw.' The woman immediately went away, and he, recovering as it were freſh ſtrength, began to ſay with a great deal of joy and cheerfulneſs, 'You are come, my lords, at a happy time, you are come at a good hour. How could you vouchſafe to come to ſo mean a ſervant as I am? I come, I come, I give you a thouſand and a thouſand thanks.' As he repeated the ſame words over and over again, thoſe that were ſtanding by aſked him whom he ſpoke to; he wondered at their queſtion, and made them this anſwer: 'What, do not you ſee the glorious

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Apoſtles St. Peter and St. Paul?' And immediately turning himſelf towards them he began again to cry out, 'I come, I come.' The words were no ſooner out of his mouth, but he gave up his ſoul to God." Lib. 4. Dialog. c. 7. St. Gregory gives us this example of ſo holy a man, together with his happy death, in the Fourth Book of his Dialogues; for he that was ſo much afraid of offending God whilſt he lived, could not but make a very glorious end.

15. He gives us another, in the Third Book of the ſame Dialogues, of a holy biſhop, though not ſo diſcreet and cautious, which I will here relate for a warning to thoſe who are ſo much upon their guard as they ſhould be. The Saint aſſures us there were almoſt as many witneſſes of it as there were people in the town where it happened.

16. "There was in a certain city of Italy a biſhop, whoſe name was Andrew, who having always lived a very virtuous and holy life, permitted a pious and devout woman to live in the ſame houſe with him, as being well aſſured of her virtue and chaſtity. The devil laying hold of this opportunity found a way to get into his heart, and began firſt to imprint the form of this woman in his mind, and to excite him to impure and wanton thoughts. It happened at the ſame time that a certain Jew, as he was travelling from Campania to Rome, was benighted not far from this biſhop's city, and not finding any other place to lodge in, was obliged to take up in a ruinous temple of idols, where he laid himſelf down to ſleep. But fearing ſome ill neighbourhood, though he had no faith in the Croſs, yet having obſerved, that the Chriſtians uſed to ſign themſelves with it whenever they were in any danger, he did ſo too. Not being able to ſleep for fear, about midnight he ſaw a great troop of devils come into the temple, and one above the reſt ſetting himſelf in a chair in the middle of the temple, began to aſk thoſe evil ſpirits what miſchief each of them had done in the world. Every one of them, in his turn, having told how he had behaved himſelf, out ſtepped one of them at laſt and told him, that he had ſolicited Biſhop Andrew to ſin, by repreſenting to him the form of a devout woman he had with him in his houſe. As the malicious devil that preſided was liſtening very attentively to this relation, looking upon the gains the greater the more pious the perſon was, the evil one that gave him this account went on and told him, that the day before in the evening he tempted him ſo violently that, coming to the holy woman with a ſmiling countenance, he gave her a little ſtroke on the ſhoulders. Hereupon the

old enemy of mankind began to encourage this tempter to go through with what he had begun, that he might receive a particular reward for ſo noble an action. The Jew ſtood ſtill during this ceremony, and ſaw all that paſſed, trembling with fear at ſo dreadful a ſpectacle. At laſt the evil ſpirit, who was chief of the company, ſent ſome to ſee who it was had been ſo bold as to ſleep there. When they had viewed him very narrowly, they cried out, 'Alas, alas! it is an empty veſſel, but well ſealed;' at which the whole gang of evil ſpirits vaniſhed immediately. When they were gone, up roſe the Jew and made what haſte he could into the city, and there finding the biſhop in the church took him aſide, and aſked him, if he was not troubled with ſome particular temptation. The biſhop denying it, for ſhame, the Jew told him that at ſuch a time, naming the day, he caſt a wanton eye upon a ſervant of God. The biſhop continuing ſtill to deny the whole matter, the Jew ſaid to him, 'Why do you deny what I aſk you, when but yeſterday, in the evening, you went ſo far as to give her a little blow with your hand over the ſhoulders.' The biſhop aſtoniſhed at what the Jew had told him, and perceiving himſelf catched in this fault, freely confeſſed what he had denied before: and then the Jew told him how he came to know it. As ſoon as the biſhop had heard all, he proſtrated himſelf upon the earth and prayed very devoutly to Almighty God, and immediately after diſmiſſed not only this holy woman, but all the maid-ſervants he had. He built a chapel in honour of St. Andrew, in the very ſame temple of Apollo, in which the Jew had heard this paſſage, and was never troubled again with any ſuch temptation. Beſides this, he converted the Jew, by whoſe viſion and admonition he had been cured himſelf to the true knowledge of God, inſtructed him in the myſteries of our faith, baptized and received him into the church. Thus the Jew happened to find his own ſalvation, whilſt he was procuring another man's, and our Lord made uſe of the ſame means to bring one to a good life, and to preſerve another therein." L. 3. Dial. c. 7. I could inſtance here a great many other examples to this purpoſe; both of paſt times and of our own, but theſe two ſhall ſerve at preſent.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Remedies againſt Envy.

1. ENVY is a ſorrow at other mens good and a repining at their happineſs, that is, at great perſons, becauſe the envious man ſees he cannot be equal to them; at his inferiors, becauſe they endeavour to equal him; and at his equals, becauſe they vie with him. Thus Saul envied Daniel, and the Phariſees Chriſt, to that degree as to procure his death. 1 Reg. xix. For this paſſion is ſo cruel as not to ſpare even ſuch perſons as theſe. This ſin is mortal in its kind, becauſe it is as directly oppoſite to charity as hatred is: though it often proves not to be mortal, which as in all other ſins, ſo in this of envy happens, when the envy is not conſummate. For as there is a downright hatred and a ſort of an averſion, which cannot be called a perfect hatred, though it is not far from it, there is alſo a perfect and an imperfect envy, but the latter leads to the former.

2. This is one of the moſt powerful and moſt prejudicial ſins that are, and which of all others has the greateſt command and rule in the world, but particularly in courts and great mens houſes. Nay, there is no ſociety, community, or monaſtery, that can eſcape it. What man is there then that can defend himſelf againſt this monſter? Who is there ſo happy as neither to envy others, nor to be envied himſelf? For when a man conſiders what envy there has been in former times; I do not ſpeak of that which was betwixt the two brothers, Romulus and Remus, the firſt founders of Rome, but of that which was between the two brothers who firſt peopled the world, and went ſo far as to make one of them kill the other, Gen. iv. of that which Joſeph's brothers bore him, when they ſold him for a ſlave, Gen. xxxvii. of that which was between our Saviour's diſciples themſelves, before the Holy Ghoſt's coming down upon them, Luk. xxii. and above all, of that which Aaron and Mary, the choſen of God, bore their brother Moſes, Numb. xii. When a man reflects upon all this, what muſt he think of other men in the world, who are neither ſo holy as theſe perſons were, nor ſo nearly related to one another? This is certainly one of the vices that moſt predominates in the world, and does the moſt miſchief without making any noiſe. For its proper effect is to perſecute good men, and ſuch as are eſteemed for their virtue and other

commendable qualities. This is its chief aim: For this reaſon Solomon ſays, *That mens pains and labours lie all open to the envy of their neighbour.* Eccleſ. iv. 4.

3. You ought therefore, upon this conſideration, to be very cautious, and to arm yourſelf well againſt this enemy by continual prayer to God, to aſſiſt you againſt him, and by being careful of rejecting it upon all occaſions. And if it ſhould continue ſtill to ſolicit and diſturb you, be you ſtill conſtant and vigorous in beating it off; for it matters not, though the malicious fleſh feel the ſlight ſtroke of this weak motion, ſo long as the will does not conſent to it. So that if at any time you ſhould ſee your neighbour or friend in a happier and more thriving condition than yourſelf, thank God for it, and perſuade yourſelf that either you have not deſerved to fare ſo well as he does, or at leaſt that it is not requiſite you ſhould; and never forget that to envy another man's happineſs is no relief to your poverty, but rather an encreaſe and addition to your miſery.

4. But if you would know what weapons you muſt make uſe of againſt this vice, let them be the following conſiderations. Conſider therefore, in the firſt place, that envious perſons reſemble the devils, who are extremely troubled at the good works we do and at the eternal happineſs we are capable of; and this not becauſe mens loſing this happineſs can give them any hopes of obtaining it, for they are out of all hopes of ever recovering it again, but becauſe men, that are formed out of the duſt of the earth, enjoy what they have forever loſt. It this that made St. Auguſtin ſay, in his book of Chriſtian Doctrine, "God preſerve not only the hearts of Chriſtians, but of all mankind, from ever falling into this vice; becauſe it is diabolical, particularly impoſed upon the devil, and for which he will ſuffer for all eternity without any reprieve or reſpit." For, the devil is not puniſhed for committing adultery, or for any robbery or theft he has been guilty of, but for having envied man, that ſtood when he was fallen. So envious men, like the devils, envy other perſons, not ſo much becauſe they pretend to be as happy as thoſe others are, as becauſe they would have thoſe others as miſerable as themſelves. Conſider therefore, O envious man, that you would not be the better for thoſe goods for which you envy another, though he whom you envy had them not; ſo that, if his having what he has, be no prejudice to you, you have no reaſon to be troubled at it. If you envy another man's virtue, conſider you are in this point your own enemy,

enemy, becauſe there is no good work your neighbour does which you have not a ſhare in, if you are but in the ſtate of grace; and the more he merits the more you gain for yourſelf. You have ſo little reaſon therefore to envy his virtue, that you ought to rejoice both of his profit and your own, ſince you have a ſhare in his good. Conſider therefore what a misfortune it is, that your neighbours growing better ſhould make you grow worſe, whereas thoſe very goods which you cannot have would be yours through charity, if you would but love them in your neighbour; and by this means you would enjoy the benefit of other mens labours, without taking any pains yourſelf.

5. Conſider that envy burns up the heart, parches the fleſh, wearies the underſtanding, robs a man of the peace of conſcience, baniſhes all kind of joy and pleaſure from the ſoul, and makes him melancholy and uneaſy all his life-time. It is like a worm that generates in wood, which gnaws away and conſumes the very wood that gave it being. After the ſame manner, the firſt thing that envy preys upon is the heart itſelf, from whence it receives its riſe and origin. When once it has corrupted the heart, it ſoon diſfigures and changes the colour of the face; and you may gueſs by the outward paleneſs at the diſturbance and trouble there is within. For there is no judge in the world ſo ſevere as this vice is againſt itſelf, for it is perpetually puniſhing and tormenting its own author. And therefore ſeveral learned men very properly call it *juſt*, not becauſe it is really ſo, being a heinous ſin, but becauſe it is itſelf a puniſhment to him that has it, and ſo far does juſtice on him.

6. Conſider alſo how oppoſite it is to charity, which is God; and how much againſt the common good, which every one ſhould promote, as far as he can, for to envy another man's happineſs, and to hate thoſe perſons whom God has created and redeemed, and on whom he is continually beſtowing ſo many favours. What is this but to diſlike and undo what God has done in will at leaſt, and in deſire, if not in effect and actions? But if you would have a more efficacious remedy againſt this poiſon, love humility and abhor pride, which is the mother of this plague. Becauſe a proud man, not being able to endure any one above, or even equal to him, is eaſily wrought upon to envy thoſe perſons who have any kind of advantage over him, perſuading himſelf that the higher another man riſes he muſt of courſe fall the lower. The Apoſtle was very ſenſible of this, when he ſaid, *Let us not be deſirous*

of

of vain-glory, challenging one another, envying one another, Galat. v. 26. designing by these words to disarm envy, and therefore begins ambition, which is the very root from whence it springs. For the same reason you should wean your affection from the love of worldly riches, and fix it upon none but the spiritual, and on the inheritance you are to have in Heaven; because this treasure is of such a nature that it will never grow less, because there are many to enjoy it; for, on the contrary, the more there are to possess it the more it increases; whereas worldly riches, the more they are distributed the sooner they are diminished. Therefore it is that envy torments the soul of him that covets this kind of wealth, because another person getting what he covets, either deprives him entirely of it, or at least diminishes what he would have had. For a man can scarce forbear being troubled if another carries away that which he had set his heart on.

7. Nay, it is not enough for you not to be troubled at your neighbour's prosperity, you must farther endeavour to do him all the good you can, and pray to God that he would be pleased to assist him in what you cannot. Hate no man, love your friends in God, and your enemies for the sake of God, who has had such a tender and passionate love for you, though you were first his enemy, as to lay down his life to deliver you from the power of your enemies. And though your neighbour be a wicked man, yet you are not to hate him for his being so, but in such a case you must act the part of a physician who loves his patient, though he hates his distemper; and this is nothing else but to love what God has done, and hate that which has been done by man. Never say within yourself, What have I to do with this man, or what am I obliged to that man for; I do not know him, he is no relation of mine, he never did me any good turn, but I am sure he has done me many a bad one. All you have to do is, to reflect on those infinite favours you have received from God, without ever having deserved them. All the return he requires is, that you would be liberal and kind, not to him, for he has no need of any of your riches, but to your neighbour, whom he has recommended to you.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Remedies againſt Gluttony.

1. GLUTTONY is an inordinate love of eating and drinking. Our Saviour gave us a charge againſt this vice, when he ſaid, *Have a care of yourſelves, for fear your hearts ſhould be overcharged with exceſs of eating and drinking, and with the care of your life*, Luke xxi. 34.

2. Whenever therefore you find yourſelf tempted by this vice, make uſe of the following conſiderations, in order to overcome the temptation. Conſider, in the firſt place, that death came into the world by the ſin of gluttony, Gen. iii. And therefore this is to be the firſt battle you are to win. For the leſs you oppoſe this vice the more powerful the reſt will grow, and you at the ſame time the leſs able to encounter them. If therefore you would come off with victory, ſubdue gluttony firſt, for unleſs you overcome this vice you will labour againſt the others to no purpoſe. Do but deſtroy the enemies that are within, and you will find it no hard matter to overcome thoſe that are without. It avails little to fight againſt enemies abroad, whilſt there are others more dangerous at home. For this reaſon the devil tempted our Saviour firſt with gluttony, to make himſelf maſter of the gate which all other vices enter in at.

3. Caſt your eyes upon the extraordinary abſtinence of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who dealt very ſeverely with his moſt ſacred fleſh, not only during his faſt in the deſert, but at ſeveral other times, ſuffering hunger, for our example as well as for our benefit, Matth. iv. Now if he who maintains the angels by his preſence, and feeds the birds of the air, ſuffered hunger for you, it is much more reaſonable that you ſhould endure it for yourſelf. What pretence have you to value yourſelf upon being Chriſt's ſervant, if, whilſt he is faſting, you ſpend your whole life in eating and drinking? if, whilſt he is undergoing all kind of hardſhips for you, you will ſuffer nothing at all for yourſelf? John xix. If you imagine this croſs of abſtinence is too heavy, reflect upon the vinegar and gall which our Saviour taſted upon the croſs, Matth. xxvii. becauſe, as St. Bernard ſays, "There is no meat ſo unſavory but which may be made palatable, if mixed with the gall and vinegar of Jeſus Chriſt."

4. Conſider the abſtinence of all the holy fathers of the deſert, who, retiring themſelves far from any human converſation,

tion, crucified their flesh with all its inordinate appetites, in imitation of Christ, and were able, by the favour of this same Lord, to live several years upon nothing but roots; and observed such rigorous abstinence it seems incredible to us. If these men followed Christ so close, and got to Heaven this way, how can you expect to go where they are, if you follow no other path but that of delights and pleasures?

5. Consider how many poor souls there are that would be glad of a little bread and water, to satisfy their hunger, and by this you will perceive how merciful and liberal God has been to you, in providing so much better for you than he has done for them; and how unreasonable it is to make his liberality and favours the instruments of your gluttony. Consider again, how often you have received the sacred Host into your mouth, and never consent that death should enter in at the same gate which life comes in at. Consider that the pleasure of eating is confined to a very narrow space and a short time. What then can be more unreasonable than that the whole earth, air and sea, should not suffice to satisfy so small a part of man, and so short a pleasure? Yet for this very often the poor are robbed, for this many outrages are committed, that so the hunger of the little ones may become the delight of great ones. It is a miserable case that the satisfying of so small a part should cast man headlong into hell, and that all his members and senses should suffer everlasting torments for the greediness of one of them. Do not you perceive how grosly you err in pampering that flesh which will soon be food for the worms, and neglect the soul which shall at the same time be brought before the tribunal of God, where if it be found empty of virtues, though the belly be ever so full of its dainties, it shall be condemned to everlasting tortures? Nor shall the body escape when the soul is punished, because as it was created for the soul, so it shall be tormented with it. So that despising that which is the best part of you, and making much of that which is the worst, you unhappily lose both, and destroy yourself with your own food, because you make the flesh, which was given for your help and assistance, the very snare to catch your soul in, which shall one day be the companion of your torments, as it was here of your sins.

6. Remember how poor and hungry Lazarus was, who desired to feed on the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and could not get them, Luke xvi. Yet he was carried after his death by the hands of angels into Abraham's bosom; whereas the rich glutton, who was cloathed in purple, was buried

buried in hell. For it is impoſſible that hunger and gluttony, pleaſure and temperance, ſhould meet with the ſame ſucceſs in the end; when once death comes, pleaſures will be puniſhed with miſeries, and miſeries rewarded with pleaſures. What advantage have you reaped by all your former exceſs in eating and drinking? All you have got is the remorſe of conſcience, which will perhaps ſting and gall you for all eternity. So that you have quite loſt all you have devoured with ſo much laviſhneſs, and all you have kept for yourſelf is what you have given away to the poor; this is laid up ſecurely for you in Heaven.

7. But to prevent your falling into this vice you muſt conſider, in the firſt place, that when neceſſity requires to be ſatisfied, the pleaſure, which lies hid under this cloak, deſigns to obtain its end, and the more it covers its inordinate appetite, under the pretence of a lawful neceſſity, the more eaſily men are deceived by it. For this reaſon you are to uſe a great deal of caution and prudence in refraining the deſires of pleaſure, and in putting ſenſuality under the government of reaſon. If then you have a mind that your fleſh ſhould be ſubject to and ſerve the ſoul, make your ſoul ſubmit itſelf to God, for it is requiſite the ſoul ſhould be governed by God, that it may by that means rule and tame the fleſh. By the obſervance of this order we ſhall be very ſecurely conducted, that is, when God ſhall govern reaſon, reaſon direct the ſoul, and the ſoul command the body, and thus the whole man will be entirely reformed and changed. Whilſt, on the contrary, if the ſoul is not governed by reaſon, and if reaſon does not conform in all things to the will of God, the body will be always riſing up againſt the ſoul.

8. When you are tempted by gluttony, fancy you have already enjoyed that ſhort delight, and that it is already over; for the delight of the taſte is like a paſt dream, with this difference, that the conſcience is diſturbed after the pleaſure is over. Whereas if you overcome the pleaſure, your conſcience continues quiet and eaſy. There is an excellent ſentence of one of the learned ancients which comes home to our preſent purpoſe. It is this: "If you have had any trouble in the performance of a virtuous action, the trouble ſoon paſſes away, and the virtue remains; but if you have taken any pleaſure in committing an evil action, the pleaſure is ſoon over, and then there is nothing left but the filth of it." Aul. Gel. Noct. Attic.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Remedies againſt Anger, and the Hatred and Enmities which ariſe from it.

1. ANGER is an inordinate deſire of revenge againſt any one we imagine has offended us. The Apoſtle has left us a good medicine againſt this vice, when he ſays, *Let all bitterneſs, and anger, and wrath, and noiſe, and blaſphemy, be removed from you, with all kind of malice. Be kind and merciful to one another, as God has forgiven you in Chriſt*, Epheſ. v. 21—32. Our Saviour, ſpeaking in St. Matthew of this vice, ſays, *Every one that is angry with his brother without a cauſe ſhall be in danger of the judgment, but he that ſhall call him fool ſhall be in danger of hell fire*, Matth. v. 16.

2. Whenever you find yourſelf in danger of running into this outrageous vice, do not forget to make uſe of the following conſiderations, and to arm yourſelf as much as you can againſt the temptation. Conſider, in the firſt place, that even brute beaſts live peaceably with thoſe of their own kind. We ſee that elephants are friendly to one another, that ſheep and oxen are in their flocks and herds, that little birds fly together; that cranes take it by turns to ſtand centry in the night; that ſtorks, ſtags, dolphins, and many other creatures do the ſame; every body knows the friendſhip there is between the ants and the bees; nay, even wild beaſts, be they ever ſo cruel, are at peace with one another. The lion does not vent his fury upon lions, bears do not fight with bears, one wolf does not devour another, nor do dragons fall out amongſt themſelves. In fine, the very devils, the firſt authors of all our diſcord, have their mutual ties, and exerciſe their tyranny by common conſent. Man, whom peace moſt becomes, and who ſtands moſt in need of it, is the only creature that entertains an inveterate hatred againſt his own kind. Nor is it leſs remarkable, that Nature has furniſhed all other creatures with arms to fight, as the horſe with his feet, bulls with horns, boars with tuſks, bees with ſtings, birds with beaks and talons, and even gnats and flies are not without the power of biting; but thee, O man, whom ſhe has deſigned for peace and concord, ſhe ſent into the world naked and unarmed, that thou mighteſt have nothing at all to do harm with. Reflect then how unnatural it is for you to endeavour to be revenged, or to return an injury that has

been

been offered you, eſpecially with weapons ſought without yourſelf, which Nature denied you.

3. Conſider, in the next place, that anger and the deſire of revenge is a vice that becomes none but wild beaſts, of whoſe ſavage fury Solomon ſays, God gave him the knowledge, and that you conſequently degenerate and fall very low from the generoſity and nobleneſs of your condition, as often as you imitate the fury of lions, ſerpents and other wild creatures, Sap. vii. Elian relates a paſſage of a certan lion that had been wounded once with a lance in a chaſe. A twelvemonth after the perſon that had given him the wound paſſed by the ſame way in company with king Juba, who had a great train attending him; the lion knew the man again, and breaking through the guards, notwithſtanding all their endeavours to beat him off, made no ſtop till he came to the man that had hurt him, fell upon and tore him to pieces. We ſee bulls do the ſame every day to thoſe that vex them. Men that are given to anger and revenge imitate theſe brutal motions, for when they might quiet their fury with reaſon and human diſcretion, they chuſe rather to follow the fury and impulſe of beaſts, and to make uſe of that baſer part of their ſouls, which even brutes have as well as they, neglecting at the ſame time that part of them which is more divine and which they ſhare in with the angels. If you ſay it is very hard to quell and tame a heart when once it is provoked, why do not you conſider how much harder that is which the Son of God has undergone, for your ſake? What were you when he ſhed his blood for the love of you? Were you not at that time his enemy? Why do not you conſider how patiently he bears with you, notwithſtanding the ſins you are hourly committing againſt him, and with what mercy he is ready to receive you when you return to him? You will ſay perhaps your enemy does not deſerve to be pardoned, do you deſerve any better that God ſhould pardon you? You will have God ſhew his mercy to you, whilſt you yourſelf will exerciſe nothing but juſtice upon your neighbour. Conſider that if your enemy does not deſerve to be forgiven, you yourſelf are unworthy of pardon, and Jeſus Chriſt is moſt worthy that you ſhould pardon your enemy for the love of him.

4. Conſider that as long as you keep any malice in your heart you cannot make God any offering that he will accept of. Our Saviour for this reaſon ſays, *If you offer your preſent at the altar, and ſhould there remember that your brother has ſomething againſt you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go firſt and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift,*

gift, Matth. v. 23, 24. This ſufficiently ſhews what a grievous crime brotherly diſcord is, becauſe as long as it continues you are one of God's enemies, and do what you will in this ſtate you will never be able to pleaſe him: whereupon St. Gregory ſays, "That all our good actions can have no merit, unleſs we ſuffer with patience the injuries that are offered us." 21 Moral. c. 16.

5. You are alſo to conſider what he is whom you look upon as your enemy, for he muſt of neceſſity be either a juſt man or a ſinner. If he be a juſt man, it is certainly a very deplorable thing to wiſh any ill to ſuch an one, and to reckon him your enemy whom God looks upon as his friend; but if he be a ſinner, it is a caſe no leſs lamentable to deſire to be revenged of another man's wickedneſs, by being wicked yourſelf, and by making yourſelf judge in your own cauſe, to commit an injuſtice yourſelf that you may the more eaſily puniſh another man's. If the other perſon ſhould endeavour to revenge his injuries as much as you do yours, when will your quarrels be at an end? The Apoſtle teaches us a much more generous way of overcoming our enemies, when he ſays, *Overcome evil with good*, Rom. xii. 21. that is to ſay, another man's bad actions by our own good ones. For whilſt you are endeavouring to return evil for evil, and are unwilling to yield in any point whatever, you may often happen to be ſhamefully foiled, whilſt you are carried away by anger and overcome by your paſſion; whereas if you had reſiſted it, you would have ſhewn yourſelf much ſtronger than him who ſhould have taken a town by force of arms. For the taking of a city, which is a thing without you, is not half ſo conſiderable victory as is the ſubduing of the paſſions that are within you, the putting of yourſelf under your own equitable laws, and the bridling and ſtopping of your anger in its heat and in its moſt vigorous ſallies. For if you do not ſuppreſs it in time, it will riſe up againſt you, and make you do that which you will afterwards be ſorry for. And what is worſt of all, you will ſcarce be able to know what miſchief you do, becauſe an angry man thinks that whatever he does in order to revenge himſelf, he has always juſtice on his ſide; nay, he is often deceived ſo far as to imagine that the very heat of his anger is nothing but a zeal for juſtice, and thus vice hides itſelf under the colour of virtue.

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6. One therefore of the moſt ſovereign remedies for the better overcoming of this vice, is to endeavour to pluck up this evil root of an inordinate love of yourſelf, and of every thing elſe that belongs to you; otherwiſe the leaſt word ſpoken either againſt you or yours will make you fly out into a paſſion; and beſides, the more naturally you ſhall find yourſelf inclined to anger, you ought to labour ſo much the harder for the acquiring of patience, by conſidering beforehand, and preventing all kinds of grievances which you are like to meet with in your affairs. For the foreſeeing of any misfortune leſſens the influence it would otherwiſe have had over us. For this reaſon you are to make a ſtrong reſolution, as often as you ſhall perceive yourſelf breaking out into a paſſion, not to ſay or do any thing whilſt you are in that diſpoſition, nor to believe even your own ſelf, but to ſuſpect whatever your heart ſhall at that time dictate to you, let it ſeem ever ſo juſt and reaſonable; put off the execution till ſuch time as your paſſion is over, or ſay the *Pater Noſter* once over or oftner, or ſome other devout prayer. Plutarch tells us of a very eminent and learned philoſopher, who, taking his leave of a prince, his greater friend, adviſed him never, when he was in a paſſion, to order any thing to be done till he had firſt ſaid the letters of the alphabet over, to give him to underſtand what raſh and inconſiderate actions the heat of anger would excite him to.

7. And it is very obſervable, that though this is the worſt time that can be for a man to reſolve upon any thing he has to do, yet at no time has he a ſtronger deſire to do any thing in than this, which obliges you to be very prudent and rigorous in reſiſting of the temptation. For as a man that is drunk is incapable of acting according to reaſon, and afterwards repents him of what he has done, as is written of Alexander the Great; ſo he that is drunk with the wine of anger, and blinded with the vapours of this paſſion, cannot follow any advice or counſel to-day, but let it appear ever ſo ſound and wholeſome he will diſlike and condemn it to-morrow. For it is certain that the worſt counſellors in the world are anger, wine, and the deſires of the fleſh. And therefore Solomon ſays, *That wine and women make wiſe men beſides themſelves.* Where by wine, he means not only real wine which is wont to blind the reaſon, but any violent paſſion which in

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ſome manner blinds the ſenſes; and yet whatſoever a man does in ſuch a diſpoſition is never the leſs a ſin.

It is very adviſable, whenever you are angry, to employ yourſelf about ſomething elſe, and to put the thing out of your mind which was the occaſion of your paſſion, becauſe if you take away the fuel that nouriſhes the fire, the flame muſt of neceſſity go out. Endeavour alſo to love what neceſſity obliges you to ſuffer; for if ſuffering and love do not go together, the patience which appears on the outſide is very often turned into hatred. Whereupon St. Paul having ſaid, *Charity is patient*; immediately adds, *It is kind*: becauſe true charity never fails to have a kind and tender love for thoſe perſons who ſuffer patiently. In fine, it is farther adviſable to give your neighbour time to let his anger work off; for if you will but retire a little when you ſee him in a paſſion, you will give him room to overcome it by degrees: or at leaſt in ſuch a conjuncture you muſt anſwer him with a great deal of civility and mildneſs; becauſe, as Solomon ſays, *A ſoft anſwer appeaſes anger*, Prov. xv. 1.

CHAP. VIII.

Remedies againſt Sloth.

1. SLOTH is a lazineſs of mind in performing of any thing that is good, and particularly a loathing and diſtaſte of ſpiritual things. Caſſian. L. 10. We may gueſs at the danger which attends this vice from the words of our Saviour. *Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit, ſhall be cut down and thrown into the fire*, Matth. vii. 19. And in another place he adviſes us to live with a great deal of care and diligence, a virtue directly oppoſite to this vice: *Watch and pray, becauſe you do not know when God will come*, Mark xiii. 35.

Whenever therefore you perceive yourſelf tempted to this ſin, defend yourſelf againſt it, by the following conſiderations. Conſider, in the firſt place, what toils and hardſhips Chriſt underwent for your ſake, from the very beginning of his life to the end of it; how often he ſpent whole nights without taking any reſt in continual prayer; how he travelled up and down from town to town, inſtructing and curing men of their infirmities and corporal ailments; how his employ was upon ſuch things as conduced to our ſalvation; and what is much more

more than all this, how, at the time of his paſſion, he carried the heavy burden of the croſs upon his moſt ſacred ſhoulders, bending under the weight of all thoſe bitter torments which he had been put to but juſt before. If therefore the God of majeſty himſelf has taken ſo much pains to procure your ſalvation, how much more are you obliged to labour for the ſame end? It was to free you from your ſins that this moſt tender Lamb ſuffered ſo much, and will not you undergo the leaſt trouble in the world to be diſcharged from the guilt of them? Conſider what pains the Apoſtles took, when they travelled all the world over to preach the goſpel; conſider how much the martyrs, how much the confeſſors, how much the virgins, how much all the holy fathers, that retired into deſerts from the converſation of men, underwent; how much, in fine, all the ſaints now reigning with God have ſuffered; they, who by their doctrine, by their labours and ſweat, have defended the true faith of Chriſt and increaſed the holy Catholic church, to this very day.

3. Conſider that there is nothing in nature altogether idle; for the bleſſed troops of ſaints and angels in Heaven are continually ſinging God's praiſes and adoring him; the ſun, moon and ſtars, with all the heavenly bodies, are in a perpetual circle of labour to ſerve us; the plants and trees are always increaſing, from a ſmall root till they come to their juſt proportion and bigneſs; the ants are buſy all ſummer getting in corn, to maintain them in winter; the bees employ themſelves in making their honeycombs, and are careful to turn out the drones and ſuch as will not work; we find the ſame in all other creatures whatever. And can you, O man, who are a rational creature, give yourſelf up to lazineſs and ſloth, and not be aſhamed of it, when you ſee there is not an irrational creature but has a horror of this vice by bare inſtinct of nature?

4. Again, if merchants and tradeſmen take ſuch pains to gather their periſhable riches, the preſerving of which wants as much care and ſolicitude as the ſcraping of them together did, what pains ſhould not you take who are to trade for Heaven, about the acquiſition of eternal treaſures, which are never to be loſt when once gained?

5. Conſider that if you are unwilling to labour, now you have time and ſtrength, the time may come hereafter when you ſhall have neither the one nor the other. It is what we have daily examples of in others; the time of this life is ſhort, and full of a thouſand incumbrances, and therefore you ought

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to have a care of losing the opportunities you have of doing good, through your own idleness and sloth; *For the night will come wherein nobody shall be able to work*, John ix. 4.

6. Consider that the multitude and grievousness of your sins require a very rigorous penance, and a great deal of fervour and devotion to satisfy for them. St. Peter denied our Saviour three times, and wept all his life after for it, though he was already pardoned, Matth. xxvii. St. Mary Magdalen bewailed to the last moment of her life the sins she had committed before her conversion, and yet she heard our Saviour himself, with sweetness and mercy, say, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, Luke vii. I omit here, for fear of being too tedious upon this matter, the examples of several others, who set no shorter bounds to their penance than those of their life, though they had never offended God so heinously as you have done. And can you, who every day heap sins upon sins, think any pains or labour too much that is required from you, in satisfaction for your crimes? Let it therefore be your chief employ, during the time of grace and mercy, to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, that so you may, by the labours you endure in this life, buy off the torments you must otherwise suffer in the next; for though all our endeavours and actions seem mean and inconsiderable, yet they are very meritorious, in as much as they are the effects of grace; and therefore though they are but temporal, if we consider only the labour they are at the same time eternal, if we have a regard to the reward; they are short indeed as to their continuance, but the crown they are rewarded with will last for ever.

Let us not therefore suffer the time, which is given to merit in, pass away without reaping any good from it; let us set before our eyes the example of a certain holy man, that used to cry out every time he heard the clock strike out, "O my Lord and my God, here is another hour gone out of the number of those you intended for the making of my life, and for which I am to give you an account."

7. As often as we find ourselves surrounded with troubles, let us remember it is by the way of tribulations that we are to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, *and that none will be crowned but he that fights courageously*. 2 Tim. ii. 4, 5. But if you imagine you have taken sufficient pains and fought long enough already, remember what the scriptures says: *He that perseveres to the end shall be saved*, Matt. xiv. 13. So that all our actions will prove unprofitable and our labours go unrewarded, without this virtue of perseverance; neither shall he that runs get the

the prize, nor he that ſerves God obtain the laſt favour, if he does not perſevere. For this reaſon our Saviour would not come down from the croſs, when the Jews deſired it, that the work of our redemption might not be left imperfect, Matt. xxvii. And the ſame reaſon obliges us, if we intend to tread in the ſteps our head has marked out for us, to uſe our utmoſt diligence, and not to leave off our work till death, becauſe the reward which God will give us is to laſt for all eternity. Let us not ceaſe from doing penance, let us not lay down the croſs we have taken up after Chriſt; for if we do, what profit ſhall we get by a long and proſperous voyage, if we be caſt away at laſt in the very haven? Eccl. xviii.

8. You are not to be frightened at the difficulty of the labours, nor at the dangers of the combat, for God, who encourages you to fight, helps you to overcome, ſees the battle, ſupports you when you faint, and crowns you when you conquer. But if at any time you ſhould faint under the weight of your labours, you may make uſe of this remedy to bring you to yourſelf again. Do not make any compariſon between the trouble of virtue and the pleaſure that is in its oppoſite vice, but betwixt the pain you find in virtue and that which you muſt feel, if you ſhould commit the ſin. Compare the delight the crime may give you, whilſt you are committing it, with the joys you will one day receive in eternal glory; and by this you will perceive how much more advantageous it is to follow virtue than vice. When you have won one battle do not become negligent, for it often happens that ſucceſs makes us careleſs; but rather be always upon your guard, as if you expected another alarm every moment, becauſe it is as impoſſible for a man to live without temptations as it is for the ſea to be always in a calm. Beſides, a man is generally expoſed to the moſt violent temptations at his beginning to lead a new life, for the enemy does not think it worth his while to tempt thoſe whom he is maſter of already, he ſets upon them that are out of his juriſdiction and power; ſo that it is your buſineſs to be always upon the guard; to be never unprepared, or without your arms in your hands, as long as you are poſted upon the frontiers. And if you ſhould at any time perceive your ſoul wounded, you muſt not think then to ſtand with your arms acroſs, or fling your ſhield and ſword away, and deliver yourſelf up to your enemy: you are rather to imitate brave ſoldiers, who, looking upon it as a diſgrace to be defeated or forced to fly, ſet upon the enemy again, and the more they are wounded the more vigorouſly they return the ſtrokes.

And thus recovering new ſtrength by your fall, you will ſoon ſee thoſe perſons fly from whom you fled before, and you yourſelf will purſue thoſe who before purſued you. But if, as it often happens in an engagement, you ſhould be wounded a ſecond time, you are not therefore to be diſcouraged, but remember that reſolute and brave men do not fight with hopes of being never wounded, but with a reſolution never to ſurrender themſelves up to their enemies; for we cannot ſay that a man is overcome when he has received many wounds, but when, after having been wounded, he flings his arms away, and loſes all his courage. If therefore you ſhould ever receive a wound, endeavour to heal it as ſoon as you can, becauſe it is much eaſier curing one than many, and a green one is ſooner cloſed up than one that is old and rankled.

9. Do not think you have done enough in reſiſting a temptation, but rather endeavour to draw from the temptation incentives to virtue; and ſo, by your own diligence and God's grace, you will not be the worſe but the better for having been tempted, and turn all to your own benefit and advantage. If you ſhould be tempted either by impurity or gluttony, leſſen a little of the good cheer you were uſed to before, though it never went beyond what is lawful and allowable, and encreaſe your faſting and devotion. If avarice ſhould aſſault you, be more frequent in alms and good works. If you ſhould be ſet upon by vain-glory, humble yourſelf ſo much the more in all things. If you do ſo the devil may perhaps be afraid to ſolicit you again, for fear of giving you an opportunity of bettering yourſelf and of doing good works, when it is his deſire that every action you do ſhould be evil. Let your chief buſineſs be to fly idleneſs, and never be ſo much out of employment as not to attend ſomething that may be for your advantage, nor ſo much employed as in the midſt of your buſineſs not to endeavour to lift up your heart to God, and to treat ſometimes with him.

CHAP. IX.

Of ſome other Sins which every good Chriſtian muſt endeavour to avoid.

1. BESIDES theſe ſeven capital ſins there are ſeveral others that ſpring from them, which every good Chriſtian ought

ought to avoid as carefully as thoſe we have already ſpoken of. One of the chiefeſt of theſe is the taking of God's name in vain, becauſe this ſin points directly at God, and is in itſelf much more heinous than any we commit againſt our neighbour, let it be ever ſo great. Nor is this true only when a man ſwears by God's own name, but when he ſwears by the Croſs, by any of the Saints, or by his own Salvation, becauſe any of theſe oaths is a mortal ſin, if brought to aſſert or favour a lie, and ſeverely cenſured in holy writ as highly injurious to the Divine majeſty. It is true that when a man ſwears to a lie without reflecting on it, he does not ſin mortally; becauſe where there is no determination of the will, and where reaſon does not paſs a judgment upon the matter, there can be no mortal ſin. But this is not to be underſtood of thoſe perſons who have a cuſtom of ſwearing without any kind of ſcruple, without conſidering either how or what it is they ſwear, and without making the leaſt endeavour towards breaking off the bad habit. Such men as theſe being accuſtomed to ſwear to a lie, without ever reflecting upon it, are by no means free from ſin, becauſe it is what they both might and ought to have been careful in. Nor can they allege for their excuſe, that they did not think of what they ſaid, or did not deſign to ſwear to a lie; becauſe, ſince they will not break off this habit, it is not their will to avoid the effects of it, and therefore theſe and ſuch like inconveniencies are always looked upon as voluntary ſins.

2. For this reaſon every Chriſtian ought to labour for the rooting out of this evil cuſtom, that ſo theſe inadvertencies may not be reckoned as mortal ſins. The beſt method for effecting this is, to take the advice given us by our Saviour, and after him by his holy Apoſtle St. James: *Above all things, my brethren, do not ſwear, neither by Heaven nor by the earth: ſwear not in any other manner whatever. But let your diſcourſe be yea, yea; nay, nay: That you may not fall under the judgment*, Matt. v. 34. Jac. v. 12. which is, that you may not be wrought upon by cuſtom to ſwear to what is falſe, and to be condemned to everlaſting death. Nor is a man only to endeavour to avoid this ſin in himſelf, he is obliged to excite in his children, his ſervants, and in all his family, a horror and deteſtation of the ſame vice, and to reprove his acquaintance and companions for it. And when he happens himſelf to be careleſs in this point, let him, in puniſhment of his neglect, give ſome alms, ſay a *Pater Noſter* or an *Ave Maria*, not ſo much in pen-

ance for his fault, as for a memorial and advertiſement to him never to fall into it again.

SECTION I.

Of Detraction, Scoffing and Judging raſhly.

3. Another ſin we are to be very diligent in avoiding is, that of detraction, as much uſed in the world as the former; for there is no houſe ſo ſtrong, no ſociety ſo religious, or place ſo ſacred, as to eſcape the laſh of a licentious tongue. But though this vice is familiar to all ſorts of perſons, (for the world, as it gives good men ſufficient reaſon to weep by its daily follies, ſo it ſupplies the weak with matter of calumny and ſlander) yet there are always ſome perſons to be met with that are more naturally and more paſſionately inclined to this vice than others. For as there are ſome palates that can reliſh nothing that is ſweet, and love nothing but what is bitter or ſour, ſo there are ſome kinds of men ſo corrupt in themſelves and ſo full of a heavy and melancholy humour, that no ſubject of virtue, nor any commendation of one's neighbour favours well with them, but they only delight in railing, ſcoffing and detraction. So that they are, as it were, aſleep and dumb to all other diſcourſe; but as ſoon as any man happens to touch upon this ſtring, they are preſently awake again, and ready to laſh out upon that ſubject.

4. That you may therefore conceive a great hatred of ſo hurtful and execrable a vice as this is, conſider three great evils it draws after it. The firſt is, that it is not very far from mortal ſin, for there is but a very little diſtance between cenſuring and detraction; and theſe two vices being ſo near neighbours, it is eaſy to paſs from the one to the other; as the philoſophers ſay, that thoſe elements which agree in any one quality, may be eaſily converted into one another. Thus we ſee how often it happens that men, when they begin to cenſure, deſcend without any ſcruple from general imperfections to particulars, from public to private, and from little to great ones. By this means they blemiſh their neighbour's reputation, and leave it without endeavouring to wipe off the ſpot. For when the tongue is once going, and the deſire or itch of magnifying things prevails, it is as hard a matter to ſuppreſs the motion of the heart, as it is to ſtop the violence of the flame, when blown upon by the wind, or to keep in a hard-mouthed horſe, when once he has got his head: Then the railer has no reſpect for any man, and never ſtops till he diſcovers the moſt hidden

hidden ſecrets. This was the reaſon why the author of Eccleſiaſticus deſired ſo earneſtly to have a guard ſet at this little gate, when he ſaid, *Who will ſet a guard over my mouth, and a ſtrong ſeal upon my lips, that they may not be the occaſion of my fall, and that my own tongue may not condemn me*, Eccleſ. xxii. 33. He that ſaid it very well knew the great conſequence and the difficulty of this affair, becauſe he expected his cure from none but God, who is the only phyſician that can cure this diſtemper. According to theſe words of Solomon: *It is for a man to prepare his ſoul, but it belongs to God for to govern the tongue*, Prov. xvi. 1. So weighty a concern this is.

5. The ſecond evil which attends this vice is, its being very prejudicial and dangerous; becauſe there are three evils in it, at leaſt, which cannot be avoided: The firſt concerns him that ſpeaks, the ſecond thoſe that hearken and conſent to it, and the third concerns the abſent who are talked of. It is a common ſaying, That walls have ears and words have wings, and men love to ſeek new friends and to ingratiate themſelves with others, by carrying tales and ſtories under pretence of being concerned for the honour of thoſe perſons ill ſpoken of; and ſo when theſe things come to the ears of the party that has been defamed he is offended, and falls into a rage and paſſion againſt the man that defamed him: whence follows irreconcilable enmity, and ſometimes duels and bloodſhed. For this reaſon the Wiſeman ſaid, *The tale-bearer and the double-tongued ſhall be curſed; becauſe he has diſturbed a great many that were at peace*, Eccl. xxviii. 15. And all this, as you ſee, comes from a word ſpoken out of ſeaſon: For, according to the expreſſion of the Wiſeman, *A fire proceeds from but one ſpark*, Ibid. xi. 34.

6. This vice upon account of theſe great damages, is compared in ſcripture ſometimes to a *Razor*, which ſhaves the hair without being felt, Pſ. li. 2. ſometimes again to bows and arrows, which ſhoot at a great diſtance and wound thoſe that are abſent, Prov. xxv. 18. at other times to ſerpents, that make no noiſe when they bite, yet leave their poiſon in the wound, Pſ. vii. The Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed to give us to underſtand, by theſe compariſons, the malice and evil of that vice, which is ſo great that the Wiſeman ſays, *The ſtroke of a whip leaves a mark on the ſkin, but that of a bad tongue bruiſes the bones*, Eccl. xxviii. 21.

7. The third evil that attends this vice is, its being moſt abominable and infamous amongſt men; becauſe every body flies as naturally from a detractor as from a poiſonous ſerpent.

And

And therefore the Wiſeman ſays, *A man that is profuſe of his tongue is terrible in his city*, Eccl. ix. 25. Are not theſe evils great enough to make you abhor a vice which is at once ſo hurtful and ſo unprofitable? Why will you make yourſelf odious in the ſight both of God and man, without reaping any advantage by it? eſpecially by a ſin that is ſo frequent and uſual, that you can ſcarce ſpeak one word without expoſing yourſelf to the danger of falling into it. Look upon your neighbour's life as a forbidden tree which you ſhould not ſo much as touch. You are to be careful in endeavouring never to ſpeak well of yourſelf nor ill of others, becauſe the one is vanity and the other detraction. Talk of all perſons as if they were virtuous men and men of honour, and let all the world believe there is no wicked man in it by your diſcourſe. Thus you will avoid many ſins, ſcruples and remorſes of conſcience, you will gain the favour both of God and man, and be reſpected as much by others as you reſpect every body elſe. Put a bridle in your mouth, and be always ready to repel and ſwallow down thoſe words which you perceive will be too ſharp and biting. Be aſſured that it is one of the moſt prudent and diſcreet actions you can do to curb your tongue, and that there is ſcarce any empire ſo great as that which a man has, when he knows how to command and govern this member.

8. Do not think you are free from this vice, when you uſe craft in your detraction by praiſing a man firſt, when you deſign to decry him. For there are ſome detractors, like ſurgeons, who chafe the vein gently before they open it, that their lancet may find the eaſier paſſage, and the blood ſpurt out more freely. The royal Prophet, ſpeaking of ſuch perſons, ſays, *their words are ſmoother than oil, but at the ſame time they are arrows*, Pſ. liv. 22.

9. And as it is a great virtue to forbear all detraction, ſo it is a much greater not to rail at thoſe who have done us any injury. So that the more we find ourſelves inclined to ſay any thing againſt them, the greater generoſity it will be to ſay nothing, and to ſubdue this paſſion; for where the danger is greateſt, there the moſt precaution is to be uſed.

10. Nor is it enough to forbear yourſelf from murmuring and detracting, you muſt alſo ſhut your ears againſt all that do ſo, following the advice of Eccleſiaſticus: *Stop your ears* (ſays he) *with thorns, and hearken not to a backbiting tongue*, Eccl. xxviii. 28. He thinks it not ſufficient for you to ſtop your ears with cotton or with any thing that is ſoft, he would have you do it with thorns, that ſo the words, which otherwiſe you would

would have heard with pleaſure may not only make no impreſſion upon your heart, but may prick the heart of him that delivers them, when he ſees by your looks that you are diſpleaſed at what he has told you. Solomon gives us the ſame advice in clearer terms, when he ſays, *The north wind ſcatters the clouds, and a ſevere countenance puts a ſtop to a detracting tongue*, Prov. xxv. 23. "Becauſe (as St. Jerom ſays) an arrow out of a bow cannot enter into a hard ſtone, but, on the contrary, flies back again, and ſometimes returns upon the man that ſhot it." Epiſt. 2. ad Nepotiam.

11. For this reaſon you are to impoſe ſilence upon any one that detracts, if he is your inferior, or of ſuch a condition and rank that you may do it without offence; if you cannot do this, you muſt at leaſt uſe ſome cunning to divert the diſcourſe; or, if that will not do, let the ſeverity of your countenance make him aſhamed of what he has ſaid. By this means, being civilly told of his fault, he will turn his diſcourſe, and talk of ſomething elſe. But ſhould you, on the contrary, countenance him in the leaſt, you will encourage him to go on, and ſo make yourſelf as guilty by hearing him, as he is by his talking; for as it is a very criminal action to ſet a houſe on fire, it would be very blameable for another to ſtand warming his fingers by it, when charity bids him fetch water to help to put it out.

12. But of all detractions the greateſt is, when a man ſpeaks ill of virtuous perſons, becauſe it is the ready way to diſcourage thoſe that are but weak and fainthearted, and to give an abſolute repulſe to ſuch as have no courage at all, ſo as to deter them from entering into the way of virtue. This would be laying a ſtumbling-block in their way that are but juſt beginning to walk, though thoſe that are quite grown up know how to paſs over it. And that you may have no reaſon to ſay this is but a ſmall and inconſiderable ſcandal, reflect upon theſe words of our Saviour: *Whoſoever ſhall ſcandalize one of theſe little ones that believe in me, it were better for him to have a millſtone hung about his neck, and to be ſunk to the very bottom of the ſea*, Matth. xviii. 6. You are therefore to account upon it as a kind of ſacrilege to make ſcandalous reflections on the ſervants of God; for, ſuppoſing they are ſuch as the wicked repreſent them, yet the character they bear ſhould make you have a reſpect for them, eſpecially ſince God Almighty, ſpeaking of the love he has for them, ſays, *Whoſoever ſhall touch you, touches the apple of my eye*, Zach. ii. 8.

13. Whatever

13. Whatever we have here ſaid againſt detractors and backbiters, may be applied to thoſe that jeer and ſcoff at others; and with much more reaſon, becauſe this vice, beſides its having all in it that the other has, is never without a tincture of pride, preſumption and contempt of others. So that upon this conſideration, we are more obliged to avoid this vice than the former. God, in the old law, has given us a particular caution againſt it, in theſe words: *Be not a backbiter, nor a ſcoffer amongſt the people*, Levit. xix. 16. And therefore there is no need of ſaying any more of the deformity of it, for what has been ſaid may ſuffice.

SECTION II.

Of raſh Judgments, and of the Commandments of the Church.

14. To theſe two ſins we may add that of raſh judgment, as coming very near to them, becauſe detractors and jeerers not only ſpeak ill of things which really are, but of whatever they imagine or fancy. And that they may never want ſomething to be biting upon, they furniſh themſelves with matter whenever there is no occaſion, by raſh judgments and ſecret ſuſpicions, by turning the worſt ſide of a thing outwards, when they might as eaſily turn the beſt; and this in oppoſition to what our Saviour has commanded us, ſaying, *Judge not, and you ſhall not be judged; condemn not, and you ſhall not be condemned*, Matth. vii. 1. This may often happen to be a mortal ſin, if the matter a man paſſes his ſentence upon is of concern and weight, and the judgment grounded on a ſhallow and weak foundation. But if it proves to be rather a ſuſpicion than a judgment, it will not then be a mortal ſin, becauſe the act is not entire and perfect.

15. Beſides theſe ſins againſt God, there are thoſe which a man commits againſt the five commandments of the church, which oblige us by precept; as hearing Maſs upon Sundays and holidays, confeſſing our ſins once a year, communicating at Eaſter, faſting all days appointed by the church, and paying of tithes. The commandment of faſting binds from one and twenty years of age and upwards, more or leſs, according to the diſcretion of the confeſſor or curate, if a man is not ſick, or very weak, or old labouring men, nurſes, that give ſuck, or women that are withchild, and ſuch as are not able to afford themſelves one good meal a day, and ſo there may be other lawful impediments.

16. As

16. As to the hearing of Maſs upon Sundays and holidays, a man muſt endeavour to aſſiſt there, not only in body but in ſpirit, having his mind recollected, and with a profound ſilence, with his heart fixt upon God or upon the myſteries of the Maſs, or buſied with ſome other pious thoughts, or ſaying ſome devout prayers.

17. And as for thoſe perſons who have ſervants and children, and a family to look after, they ſhould be very careful and diligent in ſeeing that all under their charge hear maſs upon holidays; and if they cannot let them go to High-maſs, becauſe of their being employed about neceſſary buſineſs, at leaſt they muſt make them go ſome time in the morning to hear a private Maſs, that ſo they may comply with their obligation. There are many maſters of families very blameable and negligent in this point; and they will anſwer for it to God. It is true, when there is any juſt and preſſing neceſſity that hinders a perſon from hearing Maſs, as his looking after a ſick perſon or any ſuch employment, it will not be then imputed to him as a ſin, becauſe neceſſity excuſes a man from this law.

18. Theſe are the moſt uſual ſins which man generally falls into. It is our duty always to endeavour to avoid them all; ſome becauſe they are mortal, others becauſe they are very near to mortal ſins, and others again, becauſe they are more heinous of themſelves than other common venial ſins. This is the way to preſerve our innocence, and thoſe white garments which Solomon requires of us, when he ſays, *Let your garments be always white, and let not your head ever want oil*, Eccl. ix. 8. that is, the unction of Divine grace, which enlightens and ſtrengthens us upon all occaſions, and which inſtructs us in and encourages us to all kind of good.

CHAP. X.

Of Venial Sins.

1. THOUGH theſe be the chief ſins you are carefully to avoid, yet do not think you are therefore allowed to run freely into all venial ſins. On the contrary, I earneſtly intreat you, not to be one of thoſe who make no ſcruple of committing a ſin when once they know it is not mortal. Conſider what the wiſe man ſays: *He that deſpiſes ſmall things, will fall by degrees into greater*, Eccl. xix. 1. Think of the old proverb,

verb, for want of a nail we loſe a ſhoe, for want of a ſhoe a horſe, and for want of a horſe a trooper. Houſes that fall with age begin their decay with ſome little flaw, which by degrees grows bigger and bigger, till the whole building comes to the ground. Conſider that though in reality neither ſeven thouſand venial ſins, nor ſeven thouſand to thoſe, can make up one mortal, yet that which St. Auguſtine ſays is true, viz. "Do not deſpiſe venial ſins, becauſe they are little; but be afraid of committing them becauſe they are many: we often ſee that little animals may kill a man, when there is a great number of them: is not a grain of ſand a very ſmall thing? And yet if you overload a veſſel with it, it will certainly ſink. How ſmall are drops of water, yet they make the greateſt rivers, and bear down the moſt ſtately edifices in the world." Super Joan. Trac. 12. ad fin. Tom. 9. & L. de decem chordis. c. 11. & L. de Medicina. Pœnitentium ad fin. Tom 9. c. 2. The meaning of this ſentence of St. Auguſtine is not that many venial amount to a mortal ſin, but that they diſpoſe the ſoul to mortal ſin, and very often make a man fall into it. Nor is this only true, but that alſo which St. Gregory ſaye, "That to fall into ſmall ſins is ſometimes more dangerous, than to fall into great ones." In Paſtora 3. p. c. 33. Becauſe the greater a fault is, the more it diſcovers itſelf, and is by conſequence the more eaſy to be remedied; whereas little faults, being looked upon as nothing, the more ſecurely a man commits them, the greater danger he is in of falling frequently into the ſame again.

2. In fine, venial ſins, though ever ſo little, are very prejudicial to the ſoul, becauſe they take away devotion, diſturb the peace and quiet of conſcience, extinguiſh the heat of charity, weaken the heart, deſtroy the vigour of the ſoul, impair the ſtrength of the ſpiritual life, and, in ſhort, reſiſt in ſome manner the Holy Ghoſt himſelf, and hinder his operations in us. For this reaſon we are obliged to uſe the utmoſt diligence for avoiding of theſe ſins, ſince it is certain there is no enemy, how mean ſoever, but may be able to do us much harm, if we do not ſecure ourſelves againſt him.

3. Now if you would know wherein theſe ſins particularly conſiſts; I anſwer that in a little anger, gluttony or vanity, in idle words and thoughts, in immoderate laughing and jeſting, in the loſs of time, in ſleeping too much, in lies and flatteries, and the like.

4. We have here deſcribed three ſorts of ſins, one which is generally mortal, another that is commonly venial, and a third that lies, as it were, betwixt theſe two extremes; ſo that

that they are ſometimes mortal and ſometimes only venial. It is requiſite we ſhun all theſe in general, much more thoſe which are in the middle, and moſt of all thoſe that are mortal; becauſe by thoſe alone our peace with God is diſturbed, our friendſhip violated, and by the ſame we loſe all the goods of grace and all the infuſed virtues; though faith and hope, it is true, cannot be loſt but by the contrary acts.

CHAP. XI.

Of ſome other ſhorter Remedies againſt all Sorts of Sins, but particularly thoſe Seven, called Capital.

1. THE ſeveral conſiderations we have here ſet down will ſerve to keep the ſoul in good order, and well armed againſt all kinds of ſins; yet during the engagement itſelf, that is, when you are tempted to any of theſe ſins, you may make uſe of theſe ſhort ſentences found amongſt the writings of a certain holy man, who uſed to arm himſelf thus, upon all occaſions, againſt every one of theſe vices.

2. When pride aſſaulted him he ſaid, "When I conſider with what an exceſs of humility the moſt high and glorious Son of God has humbled himſelf for the love of me, no creature in the world can deſpiſe me ſo much as to make me think, I do not deſerve to be much more contemned and deſpiſed."

3. If covetouſneſs ſet upon him his ſaying was, "Having once underſtood that nothing can ſatisfy my ſoul but God alone, I cannot but perſuade myſelf that it muſt be a great folly to ſeek any thing beſides him."

4. As often as impurity attacked him he ſaid, "Being ſenſible of the great dignity my body is raiſed to, when I receive my Saviour's moſt ſacred body, I ſhould account myſelf guilty of a horrible ſacrilege ſhould I defile the temple he has conſecrated to his ſervice with the filth of carnal ſins."

5. If he was tempted to anger he ſaid, "No man could ever injure him ſo far as to diſturb and trouble him, when he reflected upon the injuries he had offered God."

6. His defence againſt hatred and envy was, "I cannot wiſh any hurt to my neighbour, or refuſe to pardon any man, knowing with what mercy my God has vouchſafed to receive ſuch ſinners as I am."

7. Againſt

7. Againſt gluttony he ſaid, "That if any man would but call to mind the bitter potion of vinegar and gall which they gave the Son of God for his laſt refreſhment in the midſt of all the torments he ſuffered for us, he would be aſhamed to endeavour to pleaſe his palate with dainty meats, being obliged to undergo ſomething for his own ſins."

8. His ſaying againſt ſloth was, "Since I have been taught that for a little toil and labour here I may purchaſe for myſelf everlaſting glory, all the pains I can poſſibly take for the obtaining of this happineſs ſeem very inconſiderable."

SECTION.

9. St. Auguſtine gives us another ſort of ſhort remedies againſt all vices, though ſome perſons attribute them to St. Leo the Pope: He ſhews us in the ſame, how on the one ſide each particular vice tempts us, and what propoſals it makes us; and on the other ſide, he ſupplies us with ſuch conſiderations and reaſons, as we are to make uſe of againſt it, which I will here ſet down, looking upon them as very uſeful and beneficial.

10. Pride therefore begins firſt to ſpeak to us after this manner:——Certainly you excel others in knowledge, in eloquence, in wealth, and in ſeveral other good qualities; it is therefore reaſonable you ſhould have but little eſteem for others, as being ſo far above them.—But humility anſwers: Remember that you are but duſt and aſhes, mere rottenneſs and corruption at preſent, and deſigned to be the companion and food of worms in a very little time. And ſuppoſing you are as great as you imagine, yet the greater you are, if you do not humble yourſelf the more, you will ſoon ceaſe to be what you were. Are you greater than the angel that fell? Do you ſhine brighter upon earth than Lucifer did in Heaven? Now if his pride was the occaſion of his falling from ſo high a ſtate of glory, into ſuch an abyſs of miſery, how can you think of riſing from ſuch an exceſs of miſery to ſuch a height of glory, when you are in all reſpects as proud as he was?

11. Vain-glory comes next, and ſays, Do all the good you can, and let every body know it, that they may take you for a good man, that the whole world may reverence and honour you, and that no one may ſhew you the leaſt diſreſpect. The fear of God anſwers, it is a moſt notorious folly to fling away the purchaſe of eternal glory, for a little temporal honour. Endeavour therefore to hide all the good actions you do, at leaſt

leaſt in deſire, becauſe if you have a real deſire to conceal them, it will be no vanity in you if they ſhould come to be known; for that cannot be called public which in your wiſhes is ſecret.

12. Hypocriſy ſays, Since you have nothing in you that is good, endeavour at leaſt to make a man believe you have what you have not, that you may not be hated by all the world, if every body ſhould know you to be what you are. True religion anſwers, Endeavour much more to be what you are not, than only to be thought ſo; for it is the proper duty of a true Chriſtian not to endeavour to paſs for a good man, but to labour to make himſelf ſo; for all that you can get by impoſing upon others is your own condemnation and ruin.

13. Contempt and diſobedience ſay, Who are you, that ſhould be ſubject to others inferior to you? It is but juſt you ſhould command and they obey, ſince they do not come up to you either in wit, judgment or virtue. It is enough for you to keep the commandments of God, you need not trouble your head with thoſe of men. Subjection and obedience anſwer, The ſame reaſon that obliges you to an obſervance of God's commandments, obliges you to ſubmit to what men decree; becauſe God himſelf has ſaid, *Whoſoever hears you hears me, and he that deſpiſes you deſpiſes me*, Luk. x. 16. But if you ſay that this ſtands with reaſon and juſtice, when he that commands is a good man, and not otherwiſe, hear what the Apoſtle ſays againſt this opinion: *There is no power but what comes from God, and all things that come from God are ordained*, Rom. xiii. 1. So that it is none of your buſineſs to know what kind of men your ſuperiors are; all you are to do is to know what they command, and to put their orders in execution.

14. Envy ſays, In what are you leſs than this or that man? Why then ſhould not you have as much reſpect ſhewed you as they have, or more? How many things can you do which they cannot? It is therefore unjuſt that they ſhould be made equal to you, or ſet over you? Brotherly love anſwers, If you are more virtuous than others, you will be much ſecurer in a low place than in a high one, becauſe the higher place a man falls from, the more dangerous will be his fall. Put the caſe, that there are many men as rich or richer than you, what are you the worſe for it? You ought to conſider that whilſt you envy another that is in a better ſtation, you make yourſelf like him, of whom it is ſaid, *By the envy of the devil death came into the world, and all thoſe who are of his ſide imitate him*, Sap. ii. 24, 25.

15. Hatred

15. Hatred ſays, God Almighty can never expect you ſhould love him that is always contradicting and oppoſing you in all things, that is always detracting and backbiting you, that is always upbraiding you to your face with all your failings; that is, in fine, perpetually thwarting you in all his words and actions, for it is certain he would never thus trample upon you if he did not hate you. True love anſwers, Suppoſing theſe things are deteſtable in a man, muſt you therefore hate the image of God that is ſtamped upon him? Did not Jeſus Chriſt, even when he hung upon the croſs, love his enemies? Did he not adviſe us to the ſame a little before his departure out of this world? Baniſh therefore all the bitterneſs of hatred from your breaſt, and inſtead of it take in the ſweetneſs of love; for, beſides the eternal conſiderations and reaſons that oblige us to it, there is nothing in this life more pleaſant, nothing more ſweet than love, and nothing, on the contrary, more bitter, nothing more diſtaſteful than hatred; which, like a canker, is always preying upon the bowels that firſt gave it being.

16. Detraction is always crying, Who can endure this, Who can conceal the crimes ſuch or ſuch perſons have committed, without being acceſſory to them? Brotherly correction anſwers. We are neither to publiſh nor to conſent to our neighbour's ſins, Matt. xviii. 15. But he that has done amiſs is to be corrected with charity, and to be borne with patience. Beſides it is ſometimes convenient to take no notice of a man when he has committed a fault, that you may afterwards have a more favourable opportunity of reproving him.

17. Anger ſays, How can you have patience to endure the injuries that are offered you? Nay, it is a ſin to bear any longer; and if you do not reſent them, you will have greater affronts put upon you every day. Patience anſwers, If you would but reflect upon our Saviour's paſſions, there is no wrong which you would not be willing to put up with. For as St. Peter ſays, *Chriſt has ſuffered for us, leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps: who, when he ſuffered, never was angry with nor threatened them that uſed him ill,* 1 Pet. ii. 21. We are therefore more particularly obliged to imitate our Saviour in this point, conſidering that what we ſuffer is ſo little in compariſon of what he underwent for us: For he was affronted, deſpiſed, buffeted, ſcourged, crowned with thorns and crucified, and yet we ſinful and miſerable wretches fly into a paſſion at every little word, and the leaſt incivility that is touches us to the quick.

18. Hardneſs

18. Hardneſs of heart ſays, How can you ſpeak kindly to men that are as ſtupid, ignorant and ſenſeleſs as brute beaſts and who very often grow proud and ſaucy the kinder you are to them? Meekneſs anſwers, Your advice is not to be taken in this point, but the Apoſtle's, who ſays, *It does not become the ſervant of God to quarrel, but to carry himſelf meekly to all perſons*, 2 Tim. ii. 24. This fault of replying and wrangling, it is true, is much more dangerous in inferiors than it is in ſuperiors. Becauſe it often happens that they loſe the reſpect they ſhould have for thoſe that are put over them, when they are too kindly dealt with, and laugh at and ridicule the humility and ſweetneſs their ſuperiors ſhew them.

19. Preſumption and raſhneſs ſay, God in Heaven is witneſs of all your actions, and therefore you need not trouble your head about the opinion men have of you. Our duty to our neighbour anſwers, You are not to give other perſons occaſion of murmuring, or of revealing all they think and ſuſpect of you, but if what they find fault with you for is true, tell them ſincerely you have done amiſs; if falſe, you are with humility to deny it.

20. Sloth and idleneſs ſay, You will ſoon loſe your ſight if you give yourſelf thus continually to ſtudy, prayers and tears; if you ſpend a good part of the night in performing of theſe exerciſes, you will ſoon be diſtracted, if you tire yourſelf out with too much labour, you will become unfit for any ſpiritual exerciſes. Diligence and labour anſwer, Why do you promiſe yourſelf many years to undergo theſe hardſhips and labours? Who has given you any ſecurity that you ſhall live till to-morrow, nay, till this very hour be over? Have you forgot what our Saviour ſaid: *Watch, becauſe you know neither the day nor the hour*, Matt. xxv 23. It is your buſineſs therefore to ſhake off all idleneſs and ſloth, becauſe the kingdom of Heaven is not for the ſlothful and tepid, but for ſuch only as are diligent and reſolute.

21. Covetouſneſs ſays, if you give away what you have to ſtrangers, what will be left to maintain your own family? Mercy anſwers, remember what happened to the rich man in the goſpel, that was cloathed with purple and the fineſt linen, he was not condemned for taking away another man's goods, but for not giving away his own, Luk. xvi. For this he was condemned to hell-fire, and reduced to ſuch extremity there as not to be able to obtain one drop of water, though he begged it with ſo much earneſtneſs, for not giving the crumbs that fell from his table to a poor man that was begging at his door.

22. Gluttony

22. Gluttony ſays, God created all things for your nouriſhment, if therefore you refuſe to eat, you ſlight God Almighty's favours? Temperance anſwers, What you ſay is true in one reſpect, for God created all things, that men might not die for hunger. But to prevent his committing any exceſs, he commanded him to be abſtemious, and not being ſo is reckoned one of the chief ſins that drew down God's juſt judgments upon the unhappy city of Sodom, and was the occaſion of its utter ruin, Ezech. xvi. For that reaſon a man, though he be in good health, is to take his meat, as a ſick man does his phyſic, that is, only to ſupply the preſent neceſſity. So that if he would quite break himſelf off that vice, he muſt, beſides preſcribing himſelf a certain quantity and no more, deſpiſe all dainties, unleſs either want of health or charity oblige him to the contrary.

23. Empty joy ſays, Why do you conceal and ſmother the joy of your heart? Let every body be ſenſible of your joy, and talk pleaſantly and merrily with your companions, to divert them and to make them laugh moderate. Gravity anſwers, What is the meaning of all this mirth and pleaſantry, have you overcome the devil? Is the time of your baniſhment expired, and are you called home to your own country? You have forgot perhaps what our Saviour ſaid: *You ſhall weep and lament, but the world ſhall rejoice; nevertheleſs your ſorrow ſhall be changed into joy*, John xvi. 20. Put a ſtop therefore, I adviſe you, to this vain delight, for you have not yet weathered all the ſtorms that are ſo frequent upon this dangerous ſea.

24. Talkativeneſs ſays, There is no hurt in talking much, if a man talks well; as, on the contrary, he is not free from ſin, though he ſpeak but little, if what he ſays be ill. Diſcreet ſilence anſwers, What you ſay is true, yet it often happens that when a man would ſay many good things, he makes a bad end of what he begun well. And therefore the Wiſeman ſays, *Where there is much talk, there will be ſin*, Prov. x. 19. And if you ſhould be ſo fortunate as talking much, not to ſpeak any thing that is hurtful, it will be very hard to avoid all idle words which you muſt give an account of at the day of judgment. You muſt therefore be moderate in your talk, be it ever ſo good, leſt exceſs ſhould make it quite otherwiſe.

25. Impurity ſays, Why do you not enjoy pleaſures and delights, ſince you do not know what may happen to you? It is unreaſonable to loſe ſuch a favourable opportunity, when you cannot tell how ſoon it may paſs away. For if God had not deſigned that men ſhould enjoy theſe pleaſures, he would never

never have created men and women at the beginning. Chaſtity anſwers, I would not have you pretend to be ignorant of what is prepared for you after this life. For if you will but live purely and chaſtely here, you ſhall enjoy ſuch pleaſures and delights as ſhall never have an end; but if, on the contrary, you live lewdly here, you ſhall be condemned to torments for all eternity hereafter: And the more ſenſible you are of the ſhort durance of theſe falſe pleaſures, the more reaſon you have to live chaſtely; for how wretched an hour's pleaſure is that which is purchaſed at the expence of a life that is to laſt for ever.

26. All that has been hitherto ſaid may ſerve to furniſh us with ſuch ſpiritual weapons as are neceſſary for this combat. By the help of which we ſhall obtain the firſt part of virtue, which is to abſtain from ſin, and to maintain the poſt which God puts us in, and in which he himſelf lives, that it be not ſurpriſed by the enemy. If we defend it with reſolution, we ſhall have the honour of entertaining this heavenly gueſt; becauſe, as St. John ſays, *God is charity, and he that remains in charity, remains in God and God in him,* 1 John iv. 16. And that man is in charity who never does any thing contrary to it, and nothing is contrary to it but mortal ſin; againſt which, all that we have ſaid in this book, is to be applied as a remedy and preſervative.

THE SINNERS GUIDE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

PART THE SECOND,

Containing ſuch RULES as are requiſite for the PRACTICE of VIRTUE.

CHAP. I.

Of three Kinds of Virtues, wherein conſiſts the Fulneſs of all Juſtice.

1. HAVING in the firſt part of this book ſpoken of thoſe vices which pollute and darken the ſoul, let us now treat of ſuch virtues as adorn and beautify it with the ſpiritual ornament of juſtice. And as it is the property of juſtice to give every one his due, whether it be God, our neighbour, or ourſelf, ſo there are three ſorts of virtues that compoſe it, ſome are particularly for the performance of the duty man owes to God, ſome again for that he owes his neighbour, and others for that he owes to himſelf. This is all he has to do, in order to ſatisfy the obligations of virtue and juſtice, that is, for the making himſelf truly juſt and virtuous, the only thing we pretend to here.

2. If you would know, in ſhort, how that is to be done, and have it made more plain by a few familiar compariſons, I ſay, a man will comply exactly with theſe three duties, if he has but theſe three things:—the heart of a ſon towards God, the heart of a mother towards his neighbour, and that of a judge towards himſelf. In theſe three points of juſtice the Prophet

Prophet placed the very perfection of our good, when he ſaid, *I will ſhew thee, O man, what good conſiſts in, and what the Lord requires from thee; it is that thou do judgment, that thou love mercy, and that thou walk humbly with him*, Mich. vi. 8. The doing of judgment ſhews a man what he owes to himſelf; mercy, what he owes to his neighbours, and walking humbly with God, what his obligation is to him, ſince all our good depends on theſe three things, 1 Par. Tra. 4. c. 3. We will handle them now at large, having only ſpoke of them briefly in the Memorial of a Chriſtian Life, with a deſign to explain them more fully in this place.

CHAP. II.

Of Man's Duty to Himſelf.

1. SINCE charity begins at home, let us now begin as the Prophet did, that is, with the doing of juſtice or judgment, which is the part of a judge, and which every man ought to act towards himſelf. The duty of a good judge is to ſee that the ſtate be orderly and reformed. And becauſe in this little ſtate or commonwealth of man there are two principal parts to reform, that is, the body, with all its members and ſenſes, and the ſoul, with all its affections and powers, it is requiſite thoſe things ſhould be all governed and directed according to the rules of virtue, which we ſhall here lay down; and thus man will perform his duty to himſelf.

SECTION I.

Of the Reformation of the Body.

2. The firſt thing to be done in order to reforming of the body, is to ſettle a juſt decorum, obſerving what St. Auguſtine ſays, in his rule, "That there ſhould be nothing in our gate, our poſture, our dreſs, or in any thing elſe, that may give offence to our neighbour; but that every thing in us ſhould be conformable to the ſanctity of our profeſſion." V. Caſſian. L. 5. c. 12. To this end, he that ſerves God muſt endeavour to carry himſelf towards all men with that modeſty, with that humility, with that ſweetneſs and meekneſs, that every one he converſes with may profit and be edi-

fied by his good example. The Apoſtle would have us be like ſweet perfume, which immediately communicates its ſcent to every thing that touches it, and makes the hands it has once been in ſmell like itſelf; for ſuch ought to be the diſcourſe of thoſe that ſerve God, ſuch their actions, their behaviour and their converſation, that every body who has any thing to do with them may be edified and improved by their example. 2 Cor. ii. 15. This is one of the greateſt benefits that flows from modeſty, and an outward compoſure which is a kind of a ſilent ſermon, by which we invite men by our good example, and without the leaſt noiſe of words to praiſe God and to love virtue, according to what our Saviour commanded us, when he ſaid, *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. v. 16. What Iſaiah ſays comes to the ſame purpoſe: *The ſervants of God ſhall be called trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified*, Iſa. lxi. 3. Yet we are not to think this gives us any privilege to do good works on purpoſe that they may be ſeen: "We ought rather (according to St. Gregory's rule) to publiſh the good we do in ſuch a manner, that the intention may be ſtill unknown, that ſo our good actions may be a pattern for our neighbours, and the intention we have of pleaſing none but God, may make us always deſire ſecrecy." Lib. 29. Moral. c. 18.

3. The ſecond advantage reaped by this outward compoſure of the body, is the ſecurity of the inward man, and the preſervative of devotion. For the union and tie that is betwixt theſe two is ſo cloſe, that what one has the other immediately partakes of, and ſo on, on the contrary. For this reaſon, if the ſpirit is in good order, the body immediately is ſo too, and that naturally: and if on the other ſide the body is uneaſy and irregular, the ſpirit grows irregular and uneaſy. So that one of them is like a glaſs to the other. For as you may ſee all you do in a glaſs that ſtands before you, ſo all that paſſes in either of theſe two is immediately repreſented in the other; and this is the reaſon why an outward compoſure and modeſty is ſo great an aſſiſtance to an inward; and it would be a matter of wonder to find a recollected mind in a troubled and diſtracted body. Upon that account the Wiſe Man ſays, *He that runs too faſt will fall*, Prov. xix. 2. giving us to underſtand by this, that thoſe perſons who fall from the gravity and ſteadineſs that Chriſtian diſcipline requires, are frequently ſubject

ject to ſtumble, and cannot but often fall into a great many failings, as thoſe who walk too faſt make frequent trips.

4. The third good effect of this virtue, is the maintaining of a man in the authority and greatneſs that belongs to his perſon and employ, if he be a man in any dignity or conſiderable charge, as holy Job kept up his, who tells us himſelf in one place, *That the light of his countenance* (amidſt all his ſeveral accidents) *never fell to the ground*, Job xxix. 24. In another place he ſays, that his authority was ſo great, that young men, *when they ſaw him, hid themſelves; and that old men roſe up to pay him reſpect; that princes gave over ſpeaking, and put their fingers upon their mouths*, out of the reverence they had for him, Ibid. ver. 8, 9. The holy man backed this authority of his, which had not the leaſt appearance of pride in it, with ſo much ſweetneſs and mildneſs, that he ſays of himſelf, *That even when he ſat like a king, with his army round him, he was the comforter of the afflicted.* Ibid. ver. 25.

5. You may obſerve from hence, that the want of this modeſty and compoſure is not condemned by wiſe men for a great fault, ſo much as it is for a ſign of levity; becauſe the immoderate looſeneſs of the outward man, is a proof of the lightneſs and unſettledneſs of the inward. And therefore the author of Eccleſiaſticus ſays: *A man's cloaths, his way of laughing, and his gate ſhew us what he is*, Eccl. xix. 26. Solomon affirms the ſame in his Proverbs, where he ſays, *As men ſee their faces when they look into the water, ſo wiſe men diſcover plainly the hearts of others*, by the exterior actions they obſerve in them, Prov. xxvii. 19.

6. Theſe are the great benefits that modeſty we have ſpoken of beſtows on ſuch as endeavour to acquire it. For which reaſon I cannot think well of the too great liberty of ſome perſons who, to avoid being called hypocrites, laugh and talk and give themſelves over to a great many things, which deprive them of all theſe benefits. "For (as St. John Climachus ſays) the monk is not to lay aſide his faſts, for fear of vainglory," Grad. 14. ſo neither is it reaſonable that a man ſhould want the fruit of this virtue, out of human reſpect and conſideration; for we are not any more to lay aſide any virtue out of reſpect to others, than we are to commit one vice for the overcoming of another.

7. This is what belongs in general to the compoſing of the outward man, at all times and in all places. But becauſe it is to be obſerved more exactly at feaſts and public entertainments,

ments, we will ſhew, in the following ſection, how this is to be done.

SECTION II.

Of the Virtue of Temperance.

8. To proceed with what belongs to the government of the body; that which ſerves particularly for this end is the treating of it with rigour and ſeverity, not careſſing and making much of it. For this fleſh of ours, if we pamper and indulge it, will ſoon corrupt and ſwell with the vicious pleaſures it is allowed, whereas mortification and hard uſage keep it ſteady and even in virtue, juſt as dead fleſh is preſerved by myrrh, which is very bitter to the taſte and ſwarms in a little time with worms, if this be not applied to it. It is therefore requiſite upon this conſideration that we ſhould ſay ſomething of abſtinence, as being one of the chief virtues upon which the acquiſition of all the reſt depends, though it is very hard to be attained, becauſe of our natural averſion to it. And though what has been ſaid againſt gluttony might ſuffice to diſcover the value of temperance, becauſe the underſtanding of one contrary makes the other known; yet for the better clearing of this point, it will be proper to ſpeak of it ſeparately, to ſhew the uſe and practice of it, and what means are the fitteſt for obtaining it.

9. To begin therefore with that modeſty and decency which ought to be obſerved at table; we are inſtructed upon that matter by the Holy Ghoſt himſelf, in the book of Eccleſiaſticus, in theſe words: *Uſe thoſe things which are ſet before you like a temperate man, that you may not be hated by others for eating too much. Give over before every body elſe has done, for good order's ſake; and if there ſhould be a great many at table, be not you the firſt to hold your plate up, and do not call for drink before others*, Eccl. xxxi. 19, 20. Theſe are inſtructions very neceſſary for man, and worthy of the ſovereign Lord, that obſerved ſo perfect an order and union in making of all things, and it is his pleaſure we ſhould do ſo too.

10. St. Bernard teaches us the ſame doctrine in theſe words: "When we eat (ſays he) we ought to conſider the manner, the time, the quantity and the quality. The manner is not to fix all our affections upon thoſe things that are before us; the time is to be the uſual hour of our repaſts; the quality is to be ſatisfied with that which others eat, and not to ſeek after

ter dainties, unleſs in caſe of neceſſity." Epiſt. ad Fratres de Monte Dei. This is the rule the Saint preſcribes in few words.

11. St. Gregory, in his Morals, ſpeaks much to the ſame effect thus: "It belongs to abſtinence not to anticipate the ordinary time of meals, as Jonathan did when he eat the honeycomb; it is its duty not to long for ſuch things as are moſt palatable and dainty, as the children of Iſrael did in the deſert, when they wiſhed for the fleſhpots of Egypt; it is for it not to deſire that every thing ſhould be nicely dreſt, to eat like the Sodomites to ſatiety; nor too greedily like Eſau, who ſold his birthright for a meſs of lentils." Lib. 1. Moral. 1 Reg. xiv. 27. Num. xii. 16. 1 Reg. ii. Gen. xix. and xxv. Thus far St. Gregory comprifing much in a few words, and thoſe backed by proper examples.

12. But Hugh of St. Victor handles this ſubject more fully, who, in his Book of Monaſtical Diſcipline, teaches us how to behave ourſelves at meals in theſe words: "Two things (ſays he) require to be moderated and regulated whilſt we are at table; the one is the meat, and the other he that eats. For he that eats ſhould neither talk nor look too much about him, nor be guilty of any indecency in the comportment of his body; ſo that he ſhall bridle his tongue, and not let it bolt out every thing that comes upward; he ſhall keep his eyes in from gazing about upon every object, and keep all his other members and ſenſes in a due decorum and recollection. For it is the nature of ſome perſons, as ſoon as ever they are ſet down to table, to diſcover their intemperance and the unrulineſs of their appetite, by the diſturbance of their minds, by a perpetual unſettledneſs and diſorder of all their members, ſhaking their heads, toſſing their arms, and ſtretching out their hands, as if nobody elſe was to eat any thing there but themſelves; and thus by their looks and geſtures they expoſe their gluttony and intemperance; though they are confined to one place, yet their eyes and hands ſeem to be every where, ſo that they call for wine, cut bread, and lay hold of the diſhes all at the ſame time; and like a general that deſigns to beſiege a town, they view every part, and then ſtand conſidering where they ſhall begin firſt, becauſe if they could they would ſet upon all at once." Hugo de St. Vincent de inſtit. Novic. c. 18 & 19. He that eats muſt avoid all theſe indecencies in his perſon; but as to his meat, he is to obſerve what and how he eats as has been ſaid already.

13. Though

13. Though a man ſhould always come to a table with ſuch diſpoſitions as theſe, yet the hungrier he is the more particularly he ought to be prepared, eſpecially when he finds his appetite raiſed by the delicacy of what he ſees before him; for in ſuch a caſe, the good diſpoſition of the organs, of the taſte, and the excellency of the object itſelf, are ſtronger incentives to gluttony. It would be well then to conſider, that he is not to give ear to gluttony, which would make him believe he is hungry enough to eat the very plates and diſhes. St. John Climachus has an excellent ſentence to this end: "Gluttony (ſays he) is a mere hypocriſy of the belly, which even when it is too full is ſtill craving more; and when it is juſt ready to burſt fancies it ſhall die for hunger; but the cheat is ſoon diſcovered, for man is ſatisfied with much leſs." Deg. 14. Par. 2.

14. To put a ſtop therefore to this evil, let him reflect upon the advice of a Heathen philoſopher as often as he goes to table, which is, "That we have two gueſts to provide for, the body and the ſoul, each of them is to have its particular nouriſhment; the body muſt have what is neceſſary, and the ſoul its proper food, obſerving modeſty and temperance, which is producing of virtue the proper ſuſtenance of the ſoul."

15. Another good remedy againſt intemperance is, to bring the advantages of temperance into the balance with the ſhort continuance of the pleaſure of gluttony, to convince man how unreaſonable it is to forfeit ſuch mighty advantages for ſo beaſtly and ſhort a pleaſure.

16. It is convenient, for the clearer underſtanding of this, to conſider, that of all the ſenſes of the body thoſe of feeling and taſting are the meaneſt. Becauſe there is no creature in the world, how imperfect ſoever, but has theſe two ſenſes, though there are many that want the other three, ſeeing, hearing and ſmelling. If therefore theſe two ſenſes are the meaneſt and the moſt brutal, it cannot but follow, that the pleaſures and delights which proceed from them muſt be the meaneſt too, becauſe there is no creature whatever but is capable of enjoying them: nor are they the vileſt only, but the ſhorteſt; for the pleaſure they afford laſts no longer than whilſt their object is materially joined with them; ſo the pleaſure of taſting is gone as ſoon as ever the meat is out of our mouths. If then the ſatisfaction we receive is ſo baſe and bruiſh, and ſo ſhort and fleeting, how can any man debaſe himſelf ſo much, as to be prevailed upon by ſo poor a pleaſure, to neglect ſo great and ſo advantageous a virtue as that of temperance? This alone ought to be ſufficient to overcome this appetite,

tite, but much more, if we ſhould urge ſeveral other things that oblige us to the ſame. Let therefore the true ſervant of God put the baſeneſs and ſhort continuance of this pleaſure into the ſcale, againſt the beauty of abſtinence, the benefits it produces, the example of the ſaints, the toils and labours of martyrs, who have made their way to Heaven through fire and water; the remembrance of his paſt ſins, the torments of hell, with thoſe of purgatory, and he will find, upon balance, that every one of theſe things tells him it is neceſſary to take up the croſs, to mortify the fleſh, to ſubdue the ſin of gluttony, and to ſatisfy God for the pleaſure he has taken in ſin, by the pains of penance. He that ſits down to table with theſe diſpoſitions will find how eaſy it is to renounce all manner of delicacy and niceneſs.

17. But if there be occaſion for all this caution in eating, how much more is requiſite in drinking of wine; becauſe there is nothing ſo prejudicial and ſo deſtructive to chaſtity as wine is, nor any thing this virtue is more afraid of, looking upon it as its mortal enemy, ſince the Apoſtle tells her, *There is luxury in wine*, Epheſ. v. 18. and it is then particularly moſt dangerous when the blood is boiling with the heat of youth. This it was made St. Jerom ſay, "That wine and youth are two incentives to luſt." Ad Euſtoch. de cuſtodia Virginis. Why then will we throw oil into the fire? Why are we ſo mad as to lay more wood on, when the flame is too high already? For wine, being of its own nature ſo hot, it ſets all the humours and parts of the body a fire, but eſpecially the heart, which is the place it goes directly to, and the ſeat and reſidence of all the paſſions, which are immediately ſet in a flame and heightened by it. So that when a man has once warmed himſelf with wine, his joy, his love, his anger, his hatred, are greater than before, and all his other paſſions are raiſed much higher. It is therefore a plain caſe that, ſince one of the chief employs of the moral virtues is, the ſubduing of the paſſions and the keeping of them down, wine muſt have a quite contrary quality, inaſmuch as it kindles and inflames what virtue is to put quite out. Let every man judge from this, how much he is obliged to moderation in the uſe of it.

18. Beſides all this, wine makes a man very laviſh of his tongue; it is the cauſe of exceſſive laughter, of quarrelling, of cheating, of wranglings, of revealing ſecrets, and of many ſuch diſorders, and all this, not only becauſe the paſſions are then much ſtronger, but becauſe reaſon itſelf is clouded and overcaſt by the fumes and vapours of wine. Add to this, the occaſion a man takes of running into theſe exceſſes by ſeeing others

others do the ſame. Now theſe reaſons put all together cannot but occaſion ſuch extravagancies. It is therefore a pretty ſaying of a Philoſopher, "That the vine bears three ſorts of grapes, the firſt for neceſſity, the next for delight, and the the other for madneſs." Giving us by this to underſtand that wine, moderately taken, is to ſupply the neceſſities of nature; that the leaſt exceſs ſerves more for the exciting of pleaſure than for the relief of our neceſſities; but to drink without any moderation or bounds is to become downright mad. Therefore a man in this condition ought to ſuſpect every deſign he has and every reſolution he makes, becauſe, generally ſpeaking, it is not his reaſon but wine that puts him upon them; and what a bad counſellor wine is every body knows. Nor is it leſs convenient, for the ſhunning of all theſe dangers, to avoid too much talk or diſputes at table; becauſe a contention that begins peaceable, very often ends in quarrelling, and a man in his cups often bolts out ſomething he would afterwards wiſh he had let alone. For, as Solomon ſays, *There is no ſecret where wine reigns*, Prov. xxxi. 4.

19. And though any profuſion of the tongue is blameable at this time, yet the worſt of all is when men talk of nothing but the meats that are before them, when their diſcourſe is in praiſe of the wine, the fruit, the fiſh, and every thing elſe that is brought to table; or when they are continually finding fault with what is ſerved up, or talking of the different meats of ſuch and ſuch a country, and the excellent fiſh of ſuch and ſuch rivers. All this diſcourſe is a ſtrong argument of an intemperate mind, and of a man that would be always eating, not only with his mouth, but with his heart, his mind, his memory and his tongue.

20. But above all things, we ought to be careful not to devour our neighbour's life and converſation, for there is nothing ſo dangerous; "Becauſe (as St. Chryſoſtom writes) this is not eating the fleſh of beaſts but of men, which human nature abhors." It is written of St. Auguſtine, that being always afraid of this vice, which very few tables are free from, he had two verſes written in his dining-room, which were theſe:

"Quiſquis amat dictis abſentum rodere vitam,
"Hanc menſam vetitam noverit eſſe ſibi." In vita Aug. c. 22.

21. It is alſo to be obſerved that, as St. Jerom ſays, it is much better to eat a little every day, than to faſt for ſeveral days, and then eat to exceſs. "Rain (ſays he) does the earth a great deal of good, if it falls gently in its proper ſeaſon, but great ſtorms and tempeſts quite ſpoil it." S. Hier. Ep. 7. ad

Læc,

Læc. de inſt. filiæ. Conſider, as often as you eat, that you do not live to be a ſlave to your belly, but that you are ſoon after either to read, ſtudy or employ yourſelf about ſome good work or other, which you render yourſelf wholly unfit for when you eat ſo much that it is a burthen to you. Let temperance therefore and neceſſity, not appetite or the craving of an immoderate ſtomach, preſcribe you how much you ſhould eat; nor is pleaſure to be regarded in this caſe. Not that I would adviſe you here to ſtarve yourſelf, but not to do the buſineſs of pleaſure under the pretence of neceſſity. For you have as much need of ſomething to maintain and nouriſh your body as any other creature, but at the ſame time it is to be kept under by mortification, or otherwiſe it will turn upon you. And therefore St. Bernard ſays, "A man ſhould mortify his fleſh, but not deſtroy it; he muſt keep it ſtraight, but not pull it in pieces; he muſt not let it grow proud, but humble it; he muſt make a ſlave of it, and not let it be miſtreſs." Ep. ad fratres de monte Dei.

This may ſuffice to ſhew us what belongs to this virtue. He that would inform himſelf better of the advantages of it, and how beneficial it is in all reſpects, not only to the ſoul but to the body, that is, to health, life, honour and eſtate, nay read a treatiſe I have compoſed upon this ſubject, at the end of my book of Prayer and Meditation.

SECTION III.

Of the Government of the Senſes.

22. After ſubduing and regulating the body, our next buſineſs is to reform the ſenſes, over which the true ſervant of God muſt keep a ſtrict hand, but particularly over the eyes, which are, as it were, the gates at which all vanities enter into our ſouls, and the windows of perdition through which death itſelf gets in. Thoſe who are much given to prayer have great reaſon to ſet a ſtrict guard upon this ſenſe, both for the ſecurity of their chaſtity and for the keeping their hearts from diſtraction; for without ſuch care the ideas of things which enter into our ſouls by this way, leave ſo many different forms and impreſſions behind them, that they can neither pray nor meditate without a thouſand diſtractions and diſturbances, nor think of any thing but what is juſt before them. For this reaſon devout perſons endeavour always to keep their eyes ſo ſteady, as that they think it not enough to turn them away from

from ſuch things as may be hurtful, but they will not ſo much as look upon any noble piece of building, any rich ſuit of hangings, or any thing of that nature, that they may keep the imagination more free and pure againſt the time of their converſe with Almighty God; becauſe this is ſo nice and tickliſh an exerciſe that, not only ſins, but even the repreſentation of the images and figures of things that are not at all bad in themſelves, are a hindrance to it.

23. You ſhould be no leſs careful in the ſenſe of hearing than in that of ſeeing, becauſe it is a gate at which many things get admittance into the ſoul that diſturb and defile it. Nor ſhould we only ſhut our bad diſcourſe, but all kinds of news and relations of what happens in the world, and every thing elſe that is beſide our own buſineſs. Becauſe they who do not watch the paſſage of the ear ſo narrowly as not to entertain ſuch things as theſe, will be ſenſible of them afterward, when they ſhould be more recollected and thinking of ſomething elſe. The images of thoſe things which they heard others talk of before, are repreſented to their imaginations, and work ſo powerfully upon their minds that they cannot ſo much as think of God, without a great deal of interruption.

24. I need not ſay any thing of the ſenſe of ſmelling; for to be in love with perfumes and ſweet ſcents, beſides it favouring ſo much of luxury and ſenſuality, is a reproach to a man, becauſe it is an effeminate vice, and ſuch as few but ill women delight in.

25. As to taſte more might be ſaid, but it has been ſpoke of above, when we treated of *Temperance*.

SECTION IV.

Of the Government of the Tongue.

26. There is a great deal to be ſaid concerning the tongue; for the Wiſe Man tells us, *That it has the power of life and death*, Prov. xviii. 21. By theſe words he gives us to underſtand, that all the happineſs or miſery of a man depends upon the good or bad government of this member. St. James looks upon it as a thing of very great moment, when he ſaid: *That as great ſhips are governed by a little helm, and head-ſtrong horſes kept in with a ſmall bridle, ſo he that looks very narrowly to his tongue ſhall be able to govern and rule all the actions of his life*, Jo. iii. It is neceſſary then, for the well governing of this part, as often as we ſpeak, to remember thoſe four things, *what*, *how*, *when*, and *to what end* we ſpeak.

27. Firſt

27. Firſt then, as to what we ſpeak, or the matter of our diſcourſe, it is requiſite we take the advice of the Apoſtle: *Let not any evil words come out of your mouths, but only ſuch as are good and fit for to edify thoſe that hear them*, Epheſ. iv. 29. And in another place, explaining more at large what he means by *evil words*, he ſays, *Let not any immodeſt diſcourſe, or fooliſh talk, or ſcurrilous jeſting, which is not to the purpoſe, be ſo much as named among ſt you*, Epheſ. v. 3, 4. So that as ſkilful ſailors have all the ſhelves that may endanger their ſhips marked down in their charts, to avoid ſtriking upon them, ſo it is his buſineſs that ſerves God to obſerve all kinds of bad words, that he may, by that means, be out of all danger of uſing them. Nor ſhould a man be leſs careful in keeping of a ſecret that he is intruſted with; nay, he is to look upon it as a rock altogether as dangerous as the former, to diſcover any buſineſs he has been entruſted with.

28. As to how we are to ſpeak, or the manner, we are to take care not to ſpeak either too baſhfully or too profuſely, not too haſtily nor too formally, but with gravity, ſweetneſs, ſimplicity and care. It alſo belongs to this method or manner of ſpeaking not to be obſtinate or poſitive; becauſe very often this diſturbs the peace of conſcience, deſtroys charity, and makes us loſe our patience and our friends. It is the part of a generous and noble ſpirit not to ſuffer itſelf to be overcome in ſuch contentions as theſe, and of prudent men to follow the counſel of the Wiſe Man, who ſays, *You ſhould behave yourſelf in ſeveral things like one that knows nothing, that liſtens with ſilence, and aſks of them that are knowing*, Eccl. xxxii. 12.

29. Beſides obſerving the manner, we muſt be careful to ſpeak in due time, which is the third condition. For as the Wiſe Man ſays, *A wiſe ſaying out of a fool's mouth will not be taken notice of, becauſe he does not bring it in its due time*, Eccl. xx. 21.

30. In the laſt place, it is convenient we conſider for what end, and with what intention it is we ſpeak; becauſe ſome do it only to be looked upon as wiſe men, others to be thought witty and well diſcourſed; in the firſt it is no better than hypocriſy and deceit, in the latter it is folly and vanity. We ſhould therefore take care not only that what we ſay be good, but that the end of our ſpeaking be ſo too; by aiming at nothing elſe in our diſcourſe but God's honour and the good of our neighbour.

31. Beſides, it is proper to obſerve the company; for young men ought not to talk before their elders, the ignorant before the

the learned, laymen before prieſts and religious perſons, nor ought any thing to be ſaid where it may be taken ill, or where it may look like preſumption. In all theſe caſes it is convenient and commendable to be ſilent.

32. He that ſpeaks is to obſerve all theſe rules, that he may not err. And becauſe all perſons cannot judge of all theſe conditions, the beſt remedy is to be ſilent, that ſo, attending to what others ſay, they may comply with all theſe duties. It was upon this account the Wiſe Man ſaid, *Even a fool ſhall paſs for a wiſe man, if he holds his tongue; and for a man of underſtanding, if he will but keep his lips cloſe*, Prov. xvii. 28.

SECTION V.

Of the Mortification of the Paſſions.

33. Having thus regulated the body and all its ſenſes, the next thing we have to do, which is the main buſineſs, is to regulate the ſoul, with all its faculties. The firſt thing we are to begin with is the ſenſitive appetite, which contains all our natural affections and inclinations, as love, hatred, joy, ſadneſs, deſire, fear, hope, anger, and the like.

34. This appetite is the meaneſt part of our ſoul, and conſequently that which makes us like the beaſts, which are governed by theſe appetites and natural propenſion: This it is that debaſes and brings us nearer to the earth, and removes us the farther from Heaven. It is the very ſource of all the evils in the world, and the cauſe of our ruin: Becauſe, as St. Bernard ſays, "Do but take away ſelf-will, (that is, the deſire of this appetite) and there will be no ſuch thing as hell." Serm. 3. de Reſurr. S. Tho. 2. 2. 9. 77. Part 4.

This is, as it were, the magazine of ſin, whence it is ſupplied with arms and ammunition to do us hurt. It is another Eve, that is, the weakeſt part of our ſoul, and moſt inclined to ſin; by whoſe means the old ſerpent tempts our Adam, that is, the ſuperior part, the ſeat and reſidence of the underſtanding and will, to caſt an eye upon the forbidden tree. Here we may more plainly diſcover the force of original ſin, for here it has beſtowed all the malignity of its poiſon: Here are the battles, overthrows, victories and crowns; that is, here are the overthrows of the weak, the victories of the ſtrong, and the crowns of the conquerors: It is here, in concluſion, that virtue is trained up and exerciſed, ſince the chief buſineſs of the moral virtues is the taming and governing of theſe fierce and cruel beaſts.

35. This

35. This is the vine we are to be always pruning, this the garden we muſt be always cultivating, and theſe the weeds we are to pluck up by the roots, to plant all ſorts of virtues in the places of them.

36. So that, according to this, the true ſervants of God's main buſineſs is to be always in this garden, hoing up the weeds; or, to make uſe of another compariſon, to ſit like him that drives a chariot with the reins of his paſſions in his hand, to looſe or check them, not according to their own will, but as reaſon directs.

37. This is the chief employment of the children of God, who follow none but the motions of the Holy Ghoſt, and will not permit themſelves to be led away by the inclinations and deſires of fleſh and blood. It is this diſtinguiſhes ſpiritual from carnal men; for whilſt theſe like brute beaſts are hurried away by their paſſions, thoſe like truly rational creatures are led on by the Holy Ghoſt, and obſerve the directions of reaſon: This is the mortification and the myrrh ſo much commended in holy writ: This is the death and the grave the Apoſtle ſo often invites us to; it is the croſs and the ſelf-denial the goſpel preaches to us; it is the doing of judgment and juſtice, ſo often repeated in the Pſalms and the Prophets. And therefore it is convenient that all our labours, all our ſtrength, all our prayers, and all our employs ſhould be particularly directed this way.

38. To this purpoſe it is requiſite that every man be well acquainted with his own natural bent and inclination, and keep the ſtricteſt guard where he ſees the greateſt danger. And though we are always to war againſt all our appetites, yet are we more particularly to make our efforts againſt the deſires of honours, pleaſures and temporal goods, becauſe theſe are the three chief fountains and roots of all that is evil.

39. We muſt alſo take care not to be conceited, always deſiring to have our will and pleaſe our appetites, a vice very apt to bring us into much diſturbance and trouble, and very familiar among great perſons, and ſuch as have been always uſed to have their pleaſure obſerved in all things. The beſt way then to break ourſelves of it will be by frequent performing of what we find ourſelves leaſt inclined to, and denying our own will, though it ſhould deſire nothing but what is lawful and allowable; that we may, by this means, the more eaſily and more boldly refuſe it what it ſhould not have. Such trials and exerciſes as theſe are as neceſſary for inſtructing us in the ready and dexterous uſe of our ſpiritual arms, as well

as of the corporal; nay, they are as much more requiſite, as a victory over ourſelves and over the devils is greater than a victory over every thing beſides. We ſhould accuſtom ourſelves to mean and low employs, and not trouble our heads with what the world ſhall ſay of us, becauſe all that it can either give or take from us is very inconſiderable to him that has God for his treaſure and his inheritance.

SECTION VI.

Of the Reformation of the Will.

40. There is nothing helps ſo much to the acquiring of this mortification as the governing and adorning of the ſuperior will, which is nothing but the rational appetite, and which we are to adorn with theſe three holy diſpoſitions, humility of heart, poverty of ſpirit, and a holy hatred of ourſelves. For theſe three things make the buſineſs of mortification the eaſier. "Humility (as St. Bernard defines it) is the contempt of a man's ſelf, ariſing from a true and deep knowledge of his own failings." S. Bern. Lib. de Grad. humilit. c. 2. The main buſineſs of this virtue is to cut down all the branches of pride, with all deſires of honour, and to place itſelf in the loweſt ſtation below all other creatures, believing that any other who had received from God the ſame helps to live well as he has done, would have made better uſe of them, and been more thankful. Nor is it ſufficient that a man have this knowledge and contempt within himſelf, but he muſt endeavour exteriorly to treat himſelf in the moſt plain and humble manner that poſſibly he can, according to his condition, taking no notice of what the world thinks or ſays to the contrary. To this purpoſe it is convenient that all things belonging to us have a tincture of poverty and humility, and that we ſubject ourſelves, not only to our betters and equals, but even to our inferiors, for the love of God.

41. The ſecond condition required is poverty of ſpirit, which is a voluntary contempt of worldly things, and a ſatisfaction in the condition God has placed us in, be it ever ſo poor. This virtue at one ſtroke cuts down concupiſcence, the root of all evils, and gives a man ſuch a ſolid peace and happineſs, that Seneca was not afraid to ſay, "He that has ſhut the door upon the deſire of concupiſcence, may diſpute his happineſs with Jupiter himſelf." To ſignify, that ſince the happineſs of man conſiſts in fulfilling his heart's deſire, he that

that has once quieted and calmed them has attained the height of happineſs, or at leaſt is very near it.

42. The third condition is a holy hatred of ourſelves; our Saviour, ſpeaking of that virtue, ſays, *He that loves his life ſhall loſe it, and he that hates his life in this world preſerves it for life everlaſting*, John xii. 25. This is not to be underſtood of an evil hatred, ſuch as men have when they are reduced to a very miſerable and deſperate ſtate, but of that averſion which the ſaints had for their own fleſh, as being the cauſe of many evils and the occaſion of neglecting many good things; and for this reaſon they dealt with it according to the rules and preſcriptions of reaſon, not according to its own inclinations and deſires. Now, reaſon frequently commands us to keep it low, to uſe it very hardly, and to make it a ſlave to the ſpirit, which is to make ſuch uſe of it as is moſt reaſonable: otherwiſe we muſt expect that what the Wiſeman ſays will happen: *He that makes much of his ſervant when he is young, will afterwards find him rebellious and ſtubborn*, Prov. xxix. 21. To prevent this he adviſes us, in another place, to deal with it as we would do with a wild beaſt, to keep it always in, to put fetters upon it, and employ it continually for fear it ſhould grow idle, and by that means become proud and malicious. Now this holy hatred is of ſingular uſe as to the buſineſs of mortification, that is, as to the mortifying and retrenching all our evil deſires, though ever ſo painful and troubleſome to us. For how will it otherwiſe be poſſible to cut to the quick, to fetch blood, and to ſtrike deep, where we have ſo much love? For the arm of mortification borrows its ſtrength, not from the love of God, but from a holy hatred of a man's ſelf; and theſe give it the heart, not of a tender but of a hardy ſurgeon, to cut off from the other members whatever is corrupted and putrified, and this without any kind of mercy or pity. Much more might be ſaid of theſe three virtues of humility, poverty of ſpirit, and a holy ſelf-hatred, as likewiſe of the mortifying of thoſe ſeveral paſſions we have already ſpoken of in the laſt article, becauſe they are things of very great moment in the ſpiritual life; but having treated of them elſewhere, eſpecially in the Memorial of a Chriſtian Life, more at large, we will ſay no more of them in this place.

SECTION VII.

Of the Government of the Imagination.

43. Beſides theſe two faculties that belong to the appetite, there are two more that belong to knowledge, the imagination and the underſtanding, which anſwer the two former, that each of theſe two appetites may have ſuch a ſuitable guide and knowledge. The imagination then, the meaneſt of the two, is, of all the faculties of our ſoul, that which has been the moſt weakened by ſin and left leaſt ſubject to reaſon. This is the cauſe of its quitting our ſervice, like a runagate ſlave, without our leave, and of its rambling all the world over before we miſs it. It is alſo a faculty that is apt to buſy itſelf with every thing that comes in its way, like greedy dogs that ſmell to and turn over every thing they meet with, ſnapping and biting at whatever they ſee, and will ſoon return to it again, though you drive them away with a cudgel. It is moreover a faculty that loves its liberty and is very unconfined, always running up and down from mountain to mountain like a wild beaſt, and cannot endure to be fettered or confined, or to be ſubject to its own maſter.

44. Beſides theſe ill qualities it has of its own, ſome perſons make it much worſe through their neglect, by their treating and pampering it like a child, and leaving it entirely to its own will, without any reſtraint or contradiction. So that when they would fix it to the conſideration of heavenly things, it will not obey, becauſe of the bad habit it has got. We ſhould therefore, ſince we are acquainted with the qualities of this wild beaſt, keep it as ſhort as we can; we ſhould tie it up to the manger, that is, reſtrain it to the conſideration of ſuch things only as are good or neceſſary, and enjoin it to perpetual ſilence as to every thing elſe; ſo that we are to confine it to ſuch thoughts as are good and holy, and to keep it ſhut up from all that are not ſo, as we have tied up the tongue from all kind of words that are not either good or neceſſary.

45. To this purpoſe, it is requiſite we uſe all the care and caution imaginable, in examining thoroughly whatſoever preſents itſelf to our thoughts, to ſee whether it is to be entertained or not; that if it is, we may receive it as a friend; if not, we are to look upon it as an enemy. Thoſe who are negligent in this point, very often admit of ſuch things into their minds, as not only deſtroy devotion and the fervour of charity, but even

charity

charity itſelf, which is the very life of the ſoul. 2 Reg. iv. 5, 6. King Iſboſeth had his head cut off by two thieves who entered the houſe whilſt the portreſs, that winnowed the corn, was aſleep at the door of his anti-chamber. Thus it happens with us whenſoever we ſuffer prudence to fall aſleep, whoſe office it is to ſeparate the chaff from the corn, that is, the good thoughts from the bad, for then bad deſires come into the ſoul, which very often take its life away.

46. Nor is this diligence good only for the preſerving of this life of the ſoul, but for the obtaining of ſilence and recollection during the time of prayer; becauſe as the imagination, when it rambles and flies abroad, will not permit us to pray in quiet, ſo, on the contrary, when it is reſtrained and accuſtomed to good thoughts, it is no hard matter to make it continue in them, without being uneaſy and troubleſome.

SECTION VIII.

Of the Government of the Underſtanding.

47. After theſe powers and faculties of the ſoul comes the underſtanding, the nobleſt and greateſt of them all, which, beſides many other virtues, is to be adorned with that which excels them all, that is, prudence and diſcretion. This virtue is, in the ſpiritual life, what the eyes are in the body, the pilot in a veſſel, the king in a kingdom, or the coachman upon the coach; for it is his buſineſs to have the reins always in his hands, and to turn the horſes which way he would have them go. The ſpiritual life is, without this virtue, quite blind and helpleſs, and full of nothing but confuſion and diſorder. And therefore the glorious St. Anthony, in a conference he had with ſeveral other holy monks, in which they diſcourſed upon the excellency of the different virtues, gave the firſt place to this, as the miſtreſs of all the reſt. Caſſian. 2. Collet. de Deſcret. c. 2. It belongs then to all thoſe who love virtue to keep this virtue always in perfect view, that they may by this means make a greater advance in every other.

48. This virtue is not limited to any one particular duty, but extends itſelf to all employs and exerciſes; becauſe it is not a particular but a general virtue that is engaged in the exerciſes and practices of all the other virtues, ordering and preſcribing what is moſt requiſite to be done in each of them. We will conſider it therefore under this general acceptation, and ſpeak here of ſome actions that belong to it as ſuch. In the firſt place

then, it is the duty of prudence (faith and charity being presupposed) to direct all our actions, so as that they refer to God as to their last end. It is by it that we make a nice scrutiny into the intention with which we perform all our actions, that we may see whether what we aim at be God or ourselves. For it is the nature of self-love, according to a certain devout author, to be very subtle, and to seek all things, even in those that are the most pious and holy. Imit. Chr. L. 3. c. 59.

49. It is a point of prudence to know how to behave ourselves towards our neighbours, so as to benefit and not offend them by our conversation. In order to this it is convenient to observe mens humours and dispositions, and to feel how every one's pulse beats, that we may accordingly carry ourselves so as may be most to their advantage.

50. Another piece of prudence is to know how to bear with other mens failings, and to take no notice of their weaknesses; it is not good to search too deep into their wounds. It would be very well to consider that all human things are made up of an act and a power, that is, of perfection and imperfection: so that it is consequently impossible not to find many defects and failings in our lives, especially since the great fall nature received by sin. "Wherefore, (as Aristotle says) he is not a wise man who looks for an equal certainty and demonstration in all things, because some will bear an evident proof, and others will not; so it is not the part of a prudent person to desire that all things should be so complete and perfect, as to have nothing amiss in them, for some things are capable of this perfection, and others are not. And he that should endeavour by force to produce the contrary, would perhaps do more mischief with the means he would make use of to compass his design, than he could do good, though he compassed his end."

51. It is prudence for a man to know himself, and to understand all that is within him, that is, all his failings, his desires, his evil inclinations, and, in fine, his ignorance and want of virtue. This keeps him in from presuming vainly upon himself, and tells him what sorts of enemies he is perpetually to oppose, till he has driven them quite out of the land of promise, which is his soul; and it teaches him how solicitous and careful he is to be in this business.

52. It is prudence to know how to govern our tongues, according to the rules and circumstances already spoken of, and to know what we should say and what we ought to let alone, and how to time both the one and the other. Because, according

cording to Solomon, *there is a time of ſpeaking, and a time of holding our peace*, Eccl. iii. 7. And it is certain that it is more commendable for a prudent man to be ſilent than to talk at table, at public entertainments, and in ſuch like places.

53. It is prudence again not immediately to make confidents of all ſorts of perſons, nor to diſcover one's ſelf to every body when well warmed with talking, or to give one's opinion of things to every body that aſks it; for, as the Wiſe man ſays, *He is a fool that opens all his heart, but a wiſe man contains himſelf, and keeps things for another time*, Prov. xxix. And he that truſts himſelf with one that he ſhould not, ſhall be always in danger, and a ſlave to him he ſo raſhly confides in.

54. It is prudence to know how to prevent a danger, to be forearmed againſt what may happen, and be provided againſt all the accidents by prayer and meditation. This is what the author of Eccleſiaſticus adviſes, when he ſays, *Apply the remedy before you are ſick*, Eccl. xviii. 20. So that whenſoever you go to any feaſt or entertainments, whenſoever you have any concerns with quarrelſome and turbulent men, whenſoever you go to ſuch places as may expoſe you to any kind of danger, you ſhould always foreſee what is moſt likely to happen, and accordingly prepare yourſelf againſt it.

55. Another part of prudence is to know how to treat our body with diſcretion and moderation, ſo as neither to pamper and indulge, nor to ruin and deſtroy it, ſo as not to give it what is ſuperfluous, or to deny it what is neceſſary; to keep it under correction, but not ſo as to kill it; and to manage it ſo as that it may not fail us through too much weakneſs, nor be ſtrong enough to throw us. S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 168. a. 2.

56. It is alſo a great part of prudence to know how to behave ourſelves with moderation in our employments, be they ever ſo good and virtuous; ſo as not to be ſo intent upon them as never to give ourſelves breath and reſpite. St. Francis, in his Rules, ſays, "That all things are to ſerve the ſpirit, and that we ſhould not be ſo buſy upon outward things as to prejudice the inward, nor apply ourſelves ſo much to the love of our neighbour as to loſe that we owe to God." For if the apoſtles themſelves, who had the capacity and ability to do all things, diſengaged themſelves of leſſer things, that they might not fail in thoſe that were of greater moment, no man ſhould preſume ſo much of himſelf as to be perſuaded he can do all things, ſince we generally ſee that he who undertakes too many things at once, ſcarce ever ſucceeds in any of them. Act. vi.

57. It

57. It is no leſs a part of prudence to diſcover the deſigns of our enemy, and diſappoint his ſtratagems; not to believe every ſpirit, nor be led away by every ſhadow of good, 1 John iv. 1. Becauſe the devil very often transforms himſelf into an angel of light, and is always endeavouring to deceive good men under the pretence of virtue, 2 Cor. xi. 14. And therefore there is no danger we ſhould be more afraid of than of that which comes under the appearance of good. It is certain that the devil chuſes this way to attack thoſe that are eagerly bent upon piety.

58. To conclude, it is prudence to know how to fear and how to attack, when we get the better by giving ground, and when we loſe by preſſing forward; but above all, to know how to ſlight the opinions and judgments of the world, the cries of the multitude and the noiſe of thoſe that are perpetually barking without any reaſon, reflecting upon thoſe words: *If I ſhould pleaſe men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*, Gal. i. 10. It is certain that the greateſt folly a man can be guilty of, is to let himſelf be governed by ſuch a many-headed beaſt as the multitude is, who never reflect upon any thing they ſay or do. It alſo concerns us not to give any ſcandal, to be afraid when there is reaſon to fear, and not to be whiſtled about by every wind. It is the part of true prudence to keep a medium between all theſe extremes.

SECTION IX.

Of Prudence in our Buſineſs.

59. There is no leſs need of prudence for ſucceeding in our undertakings and for preventing of miſtakes, not to be rectified without many inconveniencies, which often make us loſe our peace of conſcience, and put our whole life into confuſion and diſorder. The following inſtructions will ſerve us as remedies againſt this evil.

60. The firſt is that of the Wiſe man, who ſays, *Let your eyes be fixed upon thoſe things that are juſt, and let your eyelids conſider the way that you are to go*, Prov. iv. 25. Where he adviſes us not to undertake any thing raſhly, but to do every thing with deliberation and good advice. Five things are neceſſary for this purpoſe: the firſt is, to recommend our buſineſs to God; the next is, to conſider what we are going about, and to weigh with diſcretion, not only the ſubſtance of it, but every circumſtance, becauſe the leaſt failing is enough to undo all again. For though an action ſhould ſucceed well, and not have

have any ill circumſtance in it, yet the doing it out of ſeaſon is ſufficient to caſt a blemiſh upon it. The third thing is, to take the advice of others along with us upon what is to be done, yet ſo as to conſult with but few, and thoſe choice and prudent perſons. For though it is good to hear the opinions of others, in order to decide the matter, yet we are to follow but few in the determination of it, for fear of failing in the execution. The fourth thing, and that very neceſſary, is, to take time enough for deliberation, and to conſider for ſome days upon the advice that ſhall be given, before we proceed any farther. For as long converſation gives us a better experience of perſons, ſo ſome days conſideration makes us ſee further into advice. A man very often ſeems to be of a different temper, after a little acquaintance with him, than we imagine he was at firſt ſight; and juſt ſo it is with advice, which though at firſt ſight it ſeemed to be advantageous, after a little deliberation proves to be quite otherwiſe. The fifth is, to be upon your guard againſt four great enemies to this virtue of prudence, which are, precipitation, paſſion, ſelfiſhneſs and vanity. For precipitation will not conſider what it has to do, paſſion is blind, ſelfiſhneſs will not admit of good advice, and vanity, whereſoever it gains admittance, ſpoils all.

61. It belongs to this virtue to ſhun all extremes, and keep a mean for virtue and truth, to fly exceſs, and be confined to juſt bounds and meaſures. So that we ſhould neither approve of nor reject all, we ſhould neither affirm nor deny every thing, we ſhould neither believe nor diſbelieve all, we are not to condemn a great many for the faults of ſome few, nor, becauſe ſome men are holy, muſt we think they are all ſo. We muſt in all things ſtand to the deciſion of reaſon, and not ſuffer ourſelves to be hurried away to extremes by the force of prejudice and paſſion.

62. Another rule of prudence is, not to like or diſlike things for being new or old, becauſe there are ſeveral things of old ſtanding that are very bad, and others again that are new, and yet very good. For antiquity is not ſufficient to juſtify what is bad, nor is novelty to cry down what is good. We ought in all things to conſider what they are worth in themſelves, and not how long they have been in uſe and practice. It is no advantage at all to vice that it has been of long continuance, for this makes it the more incurable, and all that virtue loſes by being new is, that it is not ſo well known.

63. There is another rule of prudence, which is, not to be deceived by the appearance and outſide of things, ſo as immediately

diately to paſs ſentence upon them; becauſe 'all is not gold that glitters;' nor is that always good which appears as ſuch. We often find gall covered over with honey, and frequently run our hands amongſt nettles, whilſt we are gathering flowers. Remember what Ariſtotle ſays: "That ſometimes falſehood appears more like truth than truth itſelf." Lib. de Anima. So vice may happen to look more like virtue than virtue itſelf. Above all you muſt be thoroughly convinced, that as gravity and the weighing of affairs is the companion of prudence, ſo eaſineſs and levity are inſeparable from folly. Therefore you muſt take care not to be over-eaſy in theſe ſix things, in believing, in granting, in promiſing, in reſolving, in converſing lightly with men, and in giving any way to anger. There is manifeſt danger in all theſe things, if a man is too eaſily prevailed upon to do them. For to be too forward in believing, is lightneſs of heart; to be too eaſy in promiſing, is loſing a man's liberty; to grant without conſidering, is to do what a man may afterwards repent; to be too haſty in reſolving, is to put one's ſelf in danger of committing an error, as David did in Miphiboſeth's affair, 2 Reg. ix. an over-freeneſs in converſation brings contempt; and to give way to anger is a plain ſign of folly, according to that of the Wiſe Man: *He that is patient is guided by much prudence, but an impatient man diſcovers his folly*, Prov. xiv. 29.

SECTION X.

Of ſome Means neceſſary for the obtaining of this Virtue.

64. Amongſt other means that contribute toward the acquiring of this virtue, there is ſcarce any more ſucceſsful than the experience of paſt failings, and of the proper methods tried by ourſelves or others upon the like occaſions, whence many rules of prudence may be taken. Therefore it is a common ſaying, 'That the remembrance of what is paſt is the miſtreſs and governeſs of prudence, and that the preſent day learns of that which is gone; becauſe, as Solomon ſays, *What will it be is what was, and what was is what will be again*, Eccl i. 9. So that we may judge of the preſent by the paſt, and of the paſt by the preſent.

65. But that which moſt advances the obtaining of this virtue, is a true and profound humility; as, on the contrary, the greateſt hinderance it has is pride, becauſe it is written, *Where humility is, there wiſdom is*, Prov. xiv. 2. Beſides all, the ſcripture tells us, *That God inſtructs the humble; that he is the maſter*

maſter of little ones, and that he diſcovers his ſecrets to them, Pſ. xi. Not that humility ſhould ſubmit to every one's opinion neither, or ſuffer itſelf to be carried away by every wind; for then it would be no longer humility, but an unſtableneſs, and weakneſs of heart, 1 Pet. v. James. iv. againſt which the Wiſe Man has adviſed us, ſaying, *Be not humble in your own wiſdom,* Eccl. xiii. 11. to ſignify, that a man ſhould be reſolute in maintaining of thoſe truths which he knows to be grounded upon a juſt and univerſal bottom, and that he ſhould not, as ſome weak perſons are, be diſturbed at the ſight of a ſtraw, nor ſuffer himſelf to be wrought upon by all ſorts of opinions.

65. The laſt thing that is ſerviceable for the procuring of this virtue is, humble and devout and prayer, becauſe ſince it is one of the chief graces of the Holy Ghoſt, to enlighten the ſoul with knowledge, wiſdom, counſel and underſtanding, with the greater devotion and humility, a man ſhall make his addreſs to him, and the more he has of the heart of a ſcholar and child, the more plainly he ſhall be inſtructed, and obtain the greater fulneſs of theſe heavenly graces and favours.

67. We have enlarged more than ordinarily upon this virtue of prudence, becauſe being the miſtreſs of all other virtues, it will be convenient to endeavour that which guides the reſt ſhould not be blind itſelf, leſt the whole body of virtues ſhould be deprived of ſight. But becauſe all this ſerves for the juſtifying and governing of man in regard to himſelf, which is the firſt duty of juſtice we laid down above, it is neceſſary we ſhould ſpeak now of the ſecond, which teaches us how we are to behave ourſelves towards our neighbours.

CHAP. III.

Of Man's Duty towards his Neighbour.

1. THE ſecond point of juſtice is, for a man to behave himſelf as he ought to do towards his neighbour, and to ſhew him the mercy and charity that God has commanded. None but he that has read the holy ſcriptures can believe how great a duty this is, and how earneſtly recommended to us: Read the Prophets, the Goſpels, the ſacred Epiſtles, and you will admire to ſee how ſtrictly this is enjoined. God, in the Prophet Iſaiah, makes a part of juſtice to depend upon charity, and upon uſing our neighbours well. So that when the Jews made

made their complaints to him, ſaying, *Why have we faſted, O Lord, and thou haſt taken no notice of us? Why haſt thou not regarded us when we humbled our ſouls?* His anſwer to them was: *Becauſe on the day of your faſt you follow your own wills, and not mine, and wreck your debtors: Behold you faſt for ſtrife and debate, and to ſmite with the fiſt of wickedneſs. Is not this the faſt I have choſen? To looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burden, to let the oppreſſed go free, and to break every yoke? To diſtribute your bread to the hungry, and receive ſtrangers and the poor into your houſe? When you ſee the naked cover him, and hide not yourſelf from your own fleſh,* Iſa. lviii. 3, 4, 6, 7. Then it is that I will beſtow ſuch and ſuch favours upon you, which the Prophet reckons up throughout the remaining part of the chapter. See here, wherein God places a great part of true juſtice; and how much it is his deſire we ſhould be charitable to our neighbours.

2. What ſhall I ſay of St. Paul, who recommends no virtue more earneſtly to us throughout all his Epiſtles than this? 1 Cor. xiii. What is there he does not ſay in commendation of charity? How highly does he cry it up? How particular is he in giving us all its excellencies? How far does he carry it beyond all other virtues? He tells us, *There is no better way to Heaven than this,* Rom. xii. 20. And not thinking this enough, he aſſures us in another place, *That charity is the tie of perfection,* Coloſ. iii. 14. And elſewhere, *That it is the end of all the commandments*: and again, *That he who loves his neighbour, has fulfilled all the law,* Rom. xiii. 8. Could a man ſay more in praiſe of any virtue than the Apoſtle has done of this? And can any man, after this, that deſires to know what kind of works are moſt acceptable to God, chuſe but admire and be enamoured with this virtue? Can he any longer chuſe to refer and direct all his actions to the acquiring of it?

3. Beſides this we have St. John, the beloved diſciple's canonical Epiſtle, wherein he repeats nothing ſo often, praiſes nothing ſo much, or recommends nothing ſo earneſtly as he does this virtue. And the hiſtory of his life ſays, "That as long as he lived, he made it the perpetual ſubject of his diſcourſe, as well as the practice of his actions. And being aſked one day why he ſo often repeated the ſame thing over and over again, he made anſwer, 'Becauſe this duly complied with, was alone ſufficient for ſalvation." St. Hieron. in cap. 5. Ep. Gallat.

SECTION.

SECTION.

Of the Duties of Charity.

4. He therefore that ſincerely deſires to ſerve God perfectly, ought to underſtand that one of the things which contribute moſt to this end is the obſervance of this precept of love. Yet ſo, that this love is not to be dry and barren, but muſt have all thoſe effects which proceed from a true love, for otherwiſe it will not deſerve ſo much as the name of love; if we will believe the ſame Evangeliſt, when he ſays, *If any man is rich in this world, and ſhould ſee his brother in want, and ſhould ſhut up his bowels againſt him, how does the love of God dwell in him? My little children, let us not love in words and in expreſſions only, but in deed and in truth,* 1 John iii. 17, 18. According to this, beſides many other things, there are ſix particularly compriſed under this name of love, to wit, to love, to adviſe, to aſſiſt, to bear with, to pardon and to edify. There is ſo great a connection betwixt theſe works and charity, that the more or the leſs a man has of thoſe, he has the more or the leſs of this. For ſome ſay they love, but then this love goes no farther; others love their neighbours, and give them good advice and inſtructions, but will not put their hand into their pockets to relieve their neceſſities; ſome will do all theſe three, yet have not patience enough to ſuffer an affront or injury, or to bear with the infirmities of others, not following the advice of the Apoſtle, who ſays, *Take one another's burthens upon you, and by this means you will fulfil the law of Chriſt,* Gal. vi. 2. Some perſons will make no difficulty of putting up with an affront patiently, but cannot pardon it freely; and though they have no malice in their hearts, yet they cannot give their neighbour ſo much as a good look. Theſe, it is true, comply with the firſt condition, but at the ſame time neglect the ſecond, and ſo are far enough from perfect charity. There are others, in fine, that will perform every one of theſe duties, who yet cannot edify their neighbours, either by their words or actions; and yet this is one of the principal duties of charity. Let every man then examine himſelf upon this, that he may ſee how ſhort he comes of the perfection of this virtue, or how near he reaches to it. For we may ſay, that he who loves is in the firſt degree of charity; he that loves and adviſes is in the ſecond; he that aſſiſts in the third; he that can bear an injury in the fourth; he that can forgive it, in the fifth; and he that, beſides all this, edifies his neighbour by his good life

life and converſation, which is the duty of a perfect and apoſtolical man, is come to the perfection of it.

5. Theſe are the poſitive, or affirmative acts, that are included in charity; by which we ſee what we are to do for our neighbour. There are yet, beſides theſe others that are negative, which ſhew us what we ſhould not do, ſuch, for example, as not judging any body, not detracting, not meddling with another man's goods, his honour, or his wife; giving no body ſcandal, either by abuſive or bad words, or by an uncivil and impertinent behaviour; but moſt of all, by bad avice or example. Let a man be careful in avoiding theſe things, and he will fulfil the duty of this divine command.

6. If, for the more eaſy remembering of all this, you would have me give it you in ſhort, endeavour to carry yourſelf towards your neighbour with the tenderneſs of a mother, and you will not fail of complying perfectly with all I have ſaid above. Conſider how a kind and careful mother loves her child, how ſhe adviſes him againſt dangers, how ſhe aſſiſts him in his neceſſities, how ſhe deals with him in his failings, ſometimes putting them up with patience, other times correcting him for them with juſtice, and as occaſion requires paſſing them over, and winking at them with prudence; for charity, the queen and mother of all virtues, makes uſe of theſe. Conſider how glad ſhe is at his proſperity, and how concerned for his adverſity, how ſhe looks upon his misfortune as her own, how zealous ſhe is for his honour and intereſt, with what devotion ſhe prays for him to Almighty God, and, in concluſion, how much more careful ſhe is of him than of herſelf, and how hard ſhe is to herſelf, that ſhe may be the more tender and kind to him. If your love of your neighbour is ſuch as this, you are arrived already to the height of this virtue: But putting the caſe, that you cannot attain this pitch, you muſt at leaſt aim at it in deſire, and refer all the actions of your life to it, for it is certain that the higher you endeavour to climb, the farther you will be from being low.

7 But perhaps you will aſk me, how can I have ſuch an affection for a ſtranger? I anſwer, that you are not to look upon any man as ſuch, but to eſteem him as the image of God, as the work of his hands, as his child, and as a living member of Jeſus Chriſt; ſince St. Paul ſo often tells us, *That we are all of us members of Chriſt Jeſus; and that to ſin againſt our neighbour is conſequently the ſame as to ſin againſt Chriſt, and to do good to the one is to do good to the other*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Epheſ. v. 20. So that you ſhould not conſider your neighbour as a man

man in general, or as ſuch a man, but as Chriſt himſelf, or as a living member of him; and though he is not ſuch as to the body, that matters not ſince he is ſo as to the participation of his ſpirit, and the greatneſs of the reward; our Saviour himſelf aſſuring us, that he will requite this favour as if it had been done to him.

8. Conſider alſo what we ſaid above in commendation of this virtue, and how much Jeſus Chriſt himſelf recommends it to us; ſo that if you have any true deſire of pleaſing God, you may omit no care nor pains requiſite for the procuring of a thing that is ſo acceptable to him. Conſider alſo what a love relations have for one another, upon no other account but the communication of a little fleſh and blood, and bluſh that grace ſhould not have as much power over you as nature, nor the ſpiritual alliance as the carnal. If you ſhould ſay that this is a union and participation from the ſame root and the ſame blood, which is common to both parties, conſider how much more noble thoſe alliances are which the Apoſtle has put between the faithful, ſince they have all one father and one mother, one Lord, one baptiſm, one faith, one hope, one nouriſhment, and one ſpirit that enlivens them: they have all one father, which is God; one mother, which is the Church; one Lord, which is Jeſus Chriſt; one faith, which is a ſupernatural light, of which we all partake, and which diſtinguiſhes us from the reſt of mankind; one hope, which is the ſame inheritance of glory, in which we ſhall all have but one heart and but one ſoul; one baptiſm, by which we have been all adopted for the children of one and the ſame father, and conſequently made brothers to one another; one nouriſhment, which is the moſt adorable ſacrament of the body of Chriſt, by which we are all united to and made one and the ſame thing with him, juſt as of ſeveral grains of corn is made a loaf, and the ſame wine of a great many bunches of grapes. And beſides all this, we partake of the ſame ſpirit, which is the Holy Ghoſt, who reſides in all the ſouls of the faithful, either by faith alone, or by grace and faith joined together, enlivening and ſupporting them in this life. Now if the members of one body, notwithſtanding the difference of their employments and of their forms, have ſuch a love for one another, becauſe the ſame rational ſoul animates them all, how much more conſonant to reaſon muſt it be to have the faithful do the ſame, as being all animated by this Divine Spirit, who the more noble he is, the greater power muſt he have to unite thoſe things in which he himſelf remains? If then the bare union

union of fleſh and blood be enough to make relations love one another ſo entirely, how much more force ought ſo many and ſuch ſtraight unions and alliances have over us.

9. But above all, caſt your eyes upon the ſingular, and unparalleled love Jeſus Chriſt had for us; he loved us ſo paſſionately, ſo dearly, ſo tenderly, ſo conſtantly, ſo far from any intereſt of his own or any deſert of ours, that, encouraged by ſo great an example and obliged by ſuch a favour, you ſhould diſpoſe yourſelf to love your neighbour as much as poſſible you can, after the ſame manner, that ſo you might faithfully comply with the precept which he himſelf, upon his leaving the world, gave you, with ſuch a particular caution about the obſerving of it. His words are: *I give you a new commandment, that you love another as I have loved you*, Jo. xiii. 34. He that would, beſides what has been ſaid, know how great a virtue that of alms-deeds, and of compaſſion for his neighbour is, and how excellent and meritorious, may read a Treatiſe of mine upon this ſubject, at the end of my Book of Prayer and Meditation.

CHAP. IV.

Of Man's Duty to God.

1. HAVING ſpoken of our obligations to our neighbours and ourſelves, it is convenient we ſhould ſpeak now of what we owe to God: it is the principal and moſt noble part of juſtice, and that to which the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity tend, which have God for their object, and hither looks that virtue which the divines call *religion*, whoſe object is the worſhip of God.

2. The way therefore to perform all the duties belonging to every one of theſe virtues, is to have ſuch a heart for Almighty God as a dutiful child has for his father; ſo that as he that behaves himſelf like a juſt judge to himſelf, diſcharges the obligations that are due to himſelf, and as he that looks upon his neighbours with the tender heart of a mother, acquits himſelf of all that he owes to him; ſo he that comes to God, with the heart of a ſon, will perform all his duties to him; ſince one of the main duties of the ſpirit Chriſt is to give our heart thus entirely to God.

3. Conſider

3. Conſider then with yourſelf what kind of a heart it is that a ſon has for his father, what love he bears him, with what fear and reverence, with what obedience he ſerves him, with what zeal for his honour, and with how much unintereſtedneſs; with what confidence he runs to him, in all his neceſſities, with what humility he receives his corrections, how ſubmiſſively he hears his reprimands, and how willingly he embraces all that comes from him. Do but give God ſuch a heart as this is, and you will perfectly diſcharge the part of juſtice.

4. But to the making up of ſuch a heart there are, in my opinion, nine virtues neceſſarily required, which are love, fear and reverence, confidence, zeal for God's honour, purity of intention in the ſervices you do him, prayer and recourſe to him in all your neceſſities, gratitude for his favours, an entire ſubmiſſion and conformity to his will, humility and patience in all the afflictions and mortifications he ſhall ſend you.

SECTION I.

5. To begin then in order, the firſt and principal thing we are to do is to love God as he himſelf commands we ſhould; that is, *with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength*, Deut. vi. 5. So that there is nothing in man but what muſt in its way love and ſerve this Lord of all things. The underſtanding, by thinking of him; the will, by loving him; the paſſions, by tending always to what concerns the love of him; the force of all our members and ſenſes, by employing themſelves in performing whatſoever this divine love ſhall preſcribe. But becauſe we have treated of this matter expreſly in the Memorial of a Chriſtian Life, I refer the reader thither, to inform himſelf more fully in this point.

6. What we are to deſire next, after this holy love, is fear, which is nothing but an effect of this love: becauſe the greater love we bear another, the more we are afraid, not only of loſing, but of offending him, as we ſee a dutiful ſon does with his father, and a loving wife with her huſband; for the more ſhe loves him, the more careful ſhe is that nothing be done to give him the leaſt offence. By this fear innocence is ſecured, and therefore it concerns us very much to imprint it deeply in our ſouls. This is what David begged ſo earneſtly, when he ſaid, *Pierce my fleſh, O Lord, with the fear of thee, becauſe I have been afraid of thy judgments*, Pſ. cxviii. 120. So that according to this the holy king did not think it enough to have the

the fear of God engraven in his ſoul; he deſired it ſhould be ſtuck into his very fleſh and bowels, that the lively ſenſe he had of it might be like a nail driven into his heart, to put him continually in mind of not failing in any thing that might be ungrateful to him whom he had ſuch a dread of. For this reaſon it is juſtly ſaid, *The fear of the Lord expels ſin*, Eccl. i. 27. Becauſe it is conſonant both to nature and reaſon, when a man fears another much, to be very much afraid of whatſoever may diſpleaſe him.

7. From this fear ariſes another, which is to be afraid not only of bad actions, but even of good ones, if they happen not to be ſo pure nor attended with ſuch good circumſtances as in reaſon they ought; by which means thoſe actions which are good in themſelves become nought through our faults. And upon this account St. Gregory ſaid, "That a good ſoul would fear, where there is no fault at all." Holy Job ſhews he was poſſeſſed with this fear, when he ſaid, *I was afraid, O Lord, for all my actions, as knowing that thou wilt not ſpare a ſinner*, Job ix. 28. Another effect of this fear is, to be afraid whenſoever we are aſſiſting at the Divine office in the church, (above all if the bleſſed ſacrament is there) to talk or walk up and down, or to ſtare and gaze about us, as many do. We are to behave ourſelves there with an awful and reverential regard to the Supreme Majeſty, before whom we ſtand; and which is in a more particular manner preſent in that place. Theſe and many more are the ordinary effects of this holy fear.

8. Should you aſk me how this holy fear is formed in our ſouls; I anſwer, that the love of God is the chief root from which it ſprings. Next to which, ſervile fear is neceſſary in ſome manner for the acquiring of this other; for it is the beginning of a filial fear, and brings it into the ſoul, as the needle does the ſilk into the ſtuff we are ſewing. Another thing beſides this, that goes a great way towards the procuring and increaſing of this fear, is the conſideration of theſe four things: —the greatneſs of God's majeſty, the depth of his judgments, the rigour of his juſtice, and the multitude of our ſins; to which we may add, the reſiſtance we make againſt the Divine Inſpirations. It will therefore become us to employ our minds upon the conſideration of theſe four things, becauſe they aſſiſt us ſo much for obtaining and cheriſhing of this holy effect in our ſouls, whereof we have ſpoke more copiouſly in the former book.

SECTION

SECTION II.

9. The third virtue neceſſary for this end, is confidence; that is to ſay, as a child that has a wealthy and able father aſſures himſelf that this father will not fail to aſſiſt him and provide for him, if he ſhould be ever reduced to neceſſity, or fall into any misfortune, ſo man muſt in this reſpect have the heart of a child towards God; and conſidering he has him for his Father, who has the power both of heaven and earth in his hands, he muſt put ſuch truſt in him, that whatſoever tribulations ſhall befal him, this heavenly Father of his will, out of his mercy, deliver him from them, if he does but either addreſs himſelf to him with an humble confidence, or at leaſt will turn them to his greater advantage and intereſt. For if a ſon has ſuch a confidence in his father, as to build all his ſecurity and quiet upon it, with how much better aſſurance ſhould man rely upon him who is more a father than all the fathers in the world, and richer than all mankind together? And if you ſay, that your having done no ſervice, your want of merit, and the multitude of your ſins diſcourage and deject you, your remedy in this caſe, is to conſider not your own failings and unworthineſs, but God himſelf and his eternal Son, our only Saviour and Mediator, that you may be ſtrengthened again by him. So that as when any body in croſſing a rapid river grows giddy with the violence of the ſtream, we call out to him, and bid him not look down upon the water that is in ſuch a perpetual motion, but lift up his eyes towards Heaven, and ſo he will paſs over with ſafety; we are after the ſame manner to adviſe thoſe that are weak in this reſpect, not to reflect upon themſelves during that time, nor upon their paſt ſins. But then you will aſk me, from whom you are to expect this ſtrength and confidence? Firſt then my anſwer is, that you muſt conſider the infinite goodneſs and mercy of God, who alone gives a remedy to all the miſeries in the world, and reflect upon the truth of his word, by which he has promiſed his favour and aſſiſtance to all thoſe that ſhall call upon his holy name with humility, and put themſelves under his protection. Conſider alſo the innumerable benefits you have received from his charitable hand, and learn from his mercy, which you have already had ſuch proofs of, to rely upon the ſame for the future. But above all things, conſider Jeſus Chriſt, with all his labours and merits, which are the chief rights and titles we have for the begging of any favour from

God; becauſe we are ſure, on the one ſide, that there are no merits which exceed or even come up to his; and that, on the other ſide, they are the treaſures of the church, given for the relief and ſupply of all her neceſſities. Theſe are the chief encouragements and ſupports of our confidence; and it was by theſe that the ſaints remained as ſtrong and as unmoveable in what they hoped for, as the mountain of Sion, Pſ. cxxiv. 1.

10. But it is much to be lamented, that having ſuch motives to confide in, we ſhould be ſo weak in this particular, as to be out of heart as ſoon as ever we but ſee the danger, even to run to Egypt for help, under the ſhelter of Pharaoh's chariots. So that you will find many perſons that ſerve God, who faſt and pray much, and give conſiderable alms, and are endowed with ſeveral other virtues; yet there are but very few who have the confidence of the holy Suſanna, Iſa. xxx. 1. who, after they had condemned her to death, and as they were leading her to the place of execution, continued ſtill, as the ſcripture obſerves, to put all her confidence in the Lord. All the ſcripture may be applied to perſuade this virtue, but particularly the Pſalms and Prophets, for there is ſcarce any thing ſo often repeated in them as a confidence in God, and the certainty of his aſſiſting thoſe that hope in him. Dan. xiii.

SECTION III.

11. Zeal for God's honour is the fourth virtue, that is, our main buſineſs ſhould be to look to the promoting and advancing of God's honour, to the glorifying of his holy name, and to ſee that his will be performed both in heaven and upon earth. And nothing ſhould concern or touch us more to the life than to behold men, not only neglect his will, but act contrary to it. The ſaints had all of them this zeal; and it was in all their names that theſe words were ſpoken: *The zeal of thy houſe, O Lord, has eaten me up*, Pſ. lxviii. 9. Becauſe they were ſo troubled, upon this account, that the grief of their ſouls weakened their bodies, corrupted their blood, and ſhewed itſelf in all the outward man. If we had but the ſame zeal they had, we ſhould immediately have the glorious mark, which Ezekiel ſpeaks of, the ſtamp upon our foreheads; by the means of which we ſhould be free from all the corrections and ſcourges of the Divine juſtice, Ezek. ix. 4.

12. The fifth virtue is purity of intention; its office is to make us not ſeek ourſelves, nor our own intereſt only in whatſoever

ſoever we do, but God's glory and the obſervance of his pleaſure, aſſuring ourſelves that the leſs we endeavour to promote our own intereſt with God, the greater advantages we ſhall reap, and ſo, on the contrary. This is one of thoſe things we are carefully to examine into, in the performance of all actions, and it is what it becomes us to have a zealous concern for: we muſt be very cautious leſt our eyes ſhould fix upon any thing but God; becauſe ſelf-love is of its own nature very ſubtile, and ſeeks itſelf and its own eaſe in all its actions. There are ſeveral perſons very rich in good works, and yet when they come to be weighed in the ſcale of God's juſtice, will find themſelves very light for want of this purity of intention; which is the eye the goſpel ſpeaks of, and which if it is light itſelf makes the whole body ſo, or darkens it all over if it be dark. Matth. vi. 22, 23.

13. There are many, not only laymen, but even eccleſiaſtics, who, when they are promoted to any conſiderable dignities, and obſerve how virtue is always taken notice of and honoured in ſuch kind of employs, uſe their utmoſt endeavours to make us become virtuous, and to live like pious and good men, clearing themſelves from all kind of defilement, and from every thing that may caſt the leaſt ſtain upon their honour. But their end of doing all this is only to keep up the reputation they have got, to continue in favour, that ſo they may be taken notice of for the exact diſcharge of their employs, and be promoted to greater: ſo that theſe actions do not proceed from a lively ſentiment of the love or fear of God; nor is his glory and the obedience that is due to him the end of them, all they regard is their own honour and intereſt. He therefore that acts after this manner, though he appear ſomething in the eyes of the world, is nothing better in the ſight of God than the very ſmoak and ſhadow of juſtice; moral virtues are nothing before God, as conſidered in themſelves, nor all the corporal macerations and auſterities man can poſſibly uſe, not though he ſhould ſacrifice his own children; all that God values is the ſpirit of love ſent down from Heaven, and whatſoever ſprings from this root. There was nothing in the temple but what was either gold or gilt. So it is juſt there ſhould be nothing in the living temples of our ſouls that is not either charity or gilt with it. Wherefore it concerns him that ſerves God to caſt his eyes upon what he deſigns to do, and not upon what he does; becauſe the meaneſt actions become noble, when the intention is ſo with which they are done, as the greateſt, on the contrary, degenerate into mean ones, when

they have ſomething that is mean for their object. Becauſe God does not regard the action itſelf ſo much as the intention of doing it; and this proceeds from love.

14. This is in ſome degree to imitate that moſt noble and moſt generous love which the Son of God has ſhewn us, who deſires us in the Goſpel, *to love him as he loved us*, John xiii. that is, freely and ſincerely, and without mixture of intereſt. As amongſt the ſeveral circumſtances of this Divine charity this is the moſt to be admired in the Son of God, happy will that man be who makes it his buſineſs in all his actions to imitate him. And whoſoever ſhall do ſo, may aſſure himſelf that he is very acceptable to God, as one that repreſents him in the height of virtue and in purity of intention; for reſemblance is generally the cauſe of love. Man ought therefore, when he is doing any good, to turn away his eyes from all kind of human conſiderations, and fix them upon God. Let him never conſent that an action, which has God for its reward, ſhould ſerve for a temporal end. For as it would be a great ſhame to ſee a noble and beautiful young princeſs, fit to match with a king, given away to a man of very mean extraction; ſo it is a much greater ſubject of tears to ſee virtue, which is worthy of God himſelf, employed in acquiring of worldly goods.

15. But becauſe it is no eaſy matter to obtain this purity of intention, it concerns a man very much to beg it of God earneſtly in all his prayers, and particularly in that petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* So that as the whole exerciſe of the heavenly choirs is the performing of God's will with a moſt pure intention only to pleaſe him, ſo ſhould the inhabitant of the earth, as long as he lives here, imitate this cuſtom of Heaven as far as poſſibly he can: not that it is not good and juſt to aſpire to the enjoyment of his kingdom, next to pleaſing of God, but becauſe the leſs ſelf-intereſt appears in any of our actions, the more perfect it will be.

SECTION IV.

16. The ſixth virtue is prayer; by means whereof, like children, we are to have recourſe to our father when any thing troubles or afflicts us, that through it we may continually remember our heavenly Father, walk in his preſence, and often diſcourſe with him; becauſe this is the practice and duty of good children towards their fathers. But having handled this virtue at large elſewhere, we will ſay no more of it here.

17. The

17. The ſeventh virtue is thankſgiving; whoſe poſt it is to excite us to gratitude for all God's favours, and to employ our tongues in perpetual acknowledgments of them. It is this virtue that makes us cry out with the royal Prophet, *I will praiſe the Lord at all times; his praiſe ſhall always be in my mouth*, Pſ. xxxiii. 1. And in another place, *Let my mouth, O Lord, be filled with praiſe, that I may ſing thy glory all the day long*, Pſ. lxx. 8. For if God is always giving us our life, if he is always preſerving us in the being he has given us, and continually pouring down his benefits upon us, by the motions of the heavens and by the ſervices we perpetually receive from all creatures, what can we do leſs than be always praiſing him who is always preſerving, maintaining and defending us, and beſtowing on us a thouſand other graces and favours? Let us then make this our firſt and chief exerciſe; and in order to it let us, as St. Baſil adviſes us, begin all prayers with this; let us morning, noon and night, nay, every hour of the day, never ceaſe to thank God for all his mercies and benefits, as well general as particular; for thoſe of grace, as well as thoſe of nature; but above all, for that benefit of benefits, for that grace of graces, his becoming man for us, his ſhedding his blood for our ſalvation, and for his being pleaſed to let us always enjoy his company by means of the moſt adorable ſacrament of the altar. Let us, amongſt ſo many benefits, reflect particularly upon this laſt circumſtance, that he who has humbled himſelf ſo low for us is the Lord of all creatures, and that all he has done for us has been the pure effect of his love and mercy, without the leaſt tincture of advantage or ſelf-intereſt. Much more might be ſaid upon this ſubject, but having ſpoken of it in another place where we treat of the Divine benefits, this ſhall ſuffice at preſent.

SECTION V.

Of the four Degrees of Obedience.

18. The eighth virtue that recommends us to this heavenly Father, is an entire obedience to every thing in general that he ſhall command us; and in this conſiſts the perfection of all juſtice. There are in this virtue three degrees; the firſt is, to obey God's commandments; the ſecond, to follow his council; and the third, to hearken to his inſpirations and calls. The obſervance of the commandments is neceſſary to ſalvation, the following of his counſel helps us much in the keeping of the commandments, without which we frequently fall

fall into danger; for it is a great remedy to prevent being forſworn, not to ſwear even to the truth, to prevent loſing peace and charity, not to contend, to be ſafe againſt coveting our neighbours goods, not to poſſeſs any thing of our own, and to be ſure not to endeavour to do harm to thoſe that hate us, to do them all the good we can. So that the following of the counſels is inſtead of an out-work to the precepts; and therefore he that would arrive at the end is not to think it enough to keep the one, unleſs he labour to the utmoſt of his ability, and as much as his ſtate and condition will permit, to obſerve the others. For as a man that is to get over a rapid river will not venture to croſs directly over, but will go up higher to take the tide along with him, that ſo he may do it with more ſecurity, ſo he that ſerves God ſhould not content himſelf with obſerving of no more than what is juſt enough to ſave him; he muſt take the thing a little higher, that in caſe he ſhould not reach to what he propoſed to himſelf, which would be the better, he may at leaſt arrive at that indiſpenſably requiſite to ſalvation; I mean, that which is ſufficient.

19. The third degree, we ſaid, was a ſubmiſſion to the Divine inſpirations; for faithful ſervants not only obey what their maſters command them by word of mouth, but obſerve the leaſt ſign they give of their pleaſure. But becauſe a man may be deceived in this point, by taking that for an inſpiration from God which comes only from man, or perhaps from the devil, we muſt take St. John's advice along with us here for our better ſecurity: *Do not give credit to every ſpirit, but examine whether it comes from God or not*, John iv. 1. And therefore, beſides what you meet with in holy ſcriptures and the writings of the ſaints, which are the ſtandards we muſt bring theſe things to, you may follow this general rule:—that ſince there are two ways of ſerving God, the one of our own choice, the other of obligation, whenſoever they both happen to meet together, be ſure let that which is of obligation take place of the other, though it be ever ſo great and meritorious. And thus it is we are to underſtand that moſt excellent ſaying of Samuel, *Obedience is better than ſacrifice*, 1 Reg. xv. 22. becauſe God would have men obſerve his word firſt, and afterwards do him all the other ſervices they can, ſtill with reſpect to the obedience they owe to him.

20. By neceſſary ſervices we mean, firſt, the keeping of God's commandments, without which there is no ſalvation. Next, the obſerving of ſuch perſons orders as are placed over you;

you; *Becauſe he that reſiſts them, reſiſts God's diſpoſal of things*, Rom. xiii. 2. In the third place, the obſervance of all thoſe things that are annexed to each man's ſtate and condition, as the obligations of a ſuperior in his ſtation, of a religious or of a married man in theirs. Then the obſervance of ſuch things, as though they are not neceſſary in themſelves, yet contribute very much to the obſervance of thoſe that are ſo, becauſe the neceſſity of the one makes the others in ſome manner neceſſary. As for example, you have found for a long while, that when you take ſome time every day to retire a little, and enter into yourſelf to examine your conſcience, and to treat with God about proper means for the remedying of what you find amiſs there, you lead a more regular and orderly life, that you have a more abſolute command over yourſelf and your paſſions, and are much more eaſily inclined to the embracing of all kind of virtue; you ſee, on the other ſide, that as ſoon as ever you neglect this holy exerciſe, you run immediately into a great many failings, and find yourſelf in danger of contracting your former vicious habits again; this comes from the want of a a ſufficient ſtock of grace, and of being not grounded thoroughly in virtue: and for this reaſon, as a poor man that has earned nothing all day has nothing to eat at night, ſo you, as often as you want the aſſiſtance of this devotion, grow hungry and weak, and much more apt to commit leſſer faults, which lead you by degrees into greater. In this caſe you muſt ſuppoſe that God calls you to this exerciſe, ſince you find by experience that it is the means by which he generally aſſiſts you, and that without it you always fall back again into your former courſes. What I ſay here is not to make you believe that this precept is of indiſpenſable neceſſity, but only to ſhew you how neceſſary and convenient a means this is, for your better complying with the obligations of your ſtate. Beſides, if you are nice and tender, if you are too much a friend to yourſelf, and cannot endure any thing that is hard and laborious, and yet perceive that this love of our own eaſe is a hinderance to your ſpiritual progreſs, in as much as it is the cauſe of your omitting many good works, becauſe of the labour that is in them, and of your committing many bad ones, becauſe they ſeem pleaſant and eaſy; it is plain in ſuch a caſe that God would have you uſe all your force and ſtrength, and accuſtom yourſelf to ſuch exerciſes as are moſt difficult and painful to the macerating of your body, and the mortifying of all your ſenſes and appetites; becauſe your own experience teaches you of what concern and conſequence this affair is. You may enquire after the ſame manner into all

thoſe other works, in the practice whereof you find moſt benefit, and receive the greateſt prejudice by omitting them, and you will underſtand by this means which of them God requires you ſhould do; but with ſubmiſſion yet in this, and all other matters, to the advice and direction of thoſe that are ſet over you.

21. You may ſee, by what has been ſaid, that a man is not always to take hold of that which is beſt in itſelf, but of that which is beſt and moſt neceſſary for him. For there are many things moſt noble and perfect which may not be the beſt for me, though they are the beſt in themſelves, becauſe I am neither able to perform them, nor does God call me to them. It therefore concerns every one to do juſt what he finds himſelf called to, to meaſure himſelf by his own ſtrength and abilities, and make that which is moſt proper for him the object of his choice, without aiming at thoſe things which are out of his reach; it is the advice of the Wiſe Man, when he ſays, *Do not ſet your eyes upon riches which you cannot enjoy, becauſe they will take wing like an eagle, and fly into the air*, Prov. xxiii. 5. And as for thoſe who follow not this counſel, the Prophet reproves them very ſeverely, ſaying, *You have aſpired to that which is greateſt, and it has proved the leaſt; you have ſown a great deal, and it has brought you but little*, Agg. i. 9.

22. This is the rule you are to follow between ſervices of choice and thoſe of obligation, but as to thoſe that are only of choice, you may obſerve the following method:—Among theſe ſervices ſome are public and others private; honour, intereſt, and pleaſure, are the effects of the one, but not of the other. Your beſt way therefore not to err in this point is to ſtand more upon your guard in thoſe which are public, than in thoſe which are not, and to be the more ſuſpicious the more intereſt and profit there is in the caſe. Becauſe ſelf-love is naturally very ſubtle and always ſeeking itſelf, even in exerciſes of the moſt piety and devotion. This it was gave a holy man frequent occaſion to ſay, "Do you know where God is? He is where you are not." Giving us hereby to underſtand, that the leſs advantage and ſelf-intereſt there was to be expected, the action was ſo much the more pure and divine, becauſe a man then propoſes nothing to himſelf but the ſearch of God. What I ſay here is not to oblige any man to ſtick ſo cloſe to this rule as never to act contrary to it, for after all, it may and does often happen that the other extreme may be much more meritorious than this is, and a man's obligations may weigh down all that I have ſaid; my only deſign is to adviſe perſons againſt the deceit and malice of ſelf-love, and not

not to give any credit to it, let it look ever ſo much like virtue.

23. Perfect obedience includes in it theſe three degrees, which are in all appearance the ſame the Apoſtle meant, when he ſaid, *Be not imprudent, my brethren, but wiſe, that you may know what is the will of God, good, well-pleaſing and perfect*, Epheſ. v. 17. Rom. xii. 2. The Apoſtle ſeems in this ſentence to have comprehended theſe three degrees of obedience; becauſe the obſerving of the precepts is *good*, the following of the counſels is *well pleaſing*, and the hearkening to the Divine calls and inſpirations is *perfect*. So that a man may be truly ſaid to be come to the very perfection of obedience when he has performed whatſoever God has commanded him, whatſoever he has adviſed, or whatſoever he has inſpired him to.

24. Beſides theſe three degrees there is a fourth, which is, a moſt perfect conformity to the will of God, in all he ſhall command us; by being equally diſpoſed to receive honour or diſhonour, a good reputation or a bad, health or ſickneſs, life or death; by ſubmitting ourſelves with humility to all his decrees and orders, by preparing ourſelves with an equal affection for chaſtiſements and ſtripes, or for ſmiles and careſſes, for favour or diſgrace; not looking upon that which is given us, but upon him that gives it, and upon the love with which he gives it. For a father has no leſs tenderneſs and affection for his child, when he corrects and puniſhes him, than when he makes much of and careſſes him.

25. He that has attained theſe four degrees of obedience, has acquired that reſignation ſo much recommended by ſpiritual guides, and by which man puts himſelf ſo entirely into the hands of God that he becomes as pliant as a piece of wax in the hands of an artiſt. This virtue is called reſignation; becauſe, as a clergyman that reſigns up a beneſice, lays down and delivers it entirely into the hands of his biſhop, for him to diſpoſe of as he pleaſes, without any control or contradiction; ſo a perfect man delivers himſelf up into the hands of God, that he may be his own maſter no longer, nor live for himſelf, that he may neither eat, ſleep nor work for himſelf, but for the honour and glory of his Creator, by conforming in all things to his moſt holy pleaſure and diſpoſal, and by receiving from his hands, with the ſame heart and love, all the difficulties and contradictions he ſhall meet with; by denying and renouncing himſelf and his own will for the doing of God's with all exactneſs, whoſe ſlave he acknowledges himſelf upon a thouſand accounts. David has given us an example

ple in himſelf of this reſignation, when he ſaid, *I am become like a beaſt before thee, and I am always with thee*, Pſ. lxxii. 23. Becauſe as a beaſt neither goes where it pleaſes, nor reſts where it pleaſes, nor does what it pleaſes, but obeys its keeper in all things, ſo he that ſerves God is to ſubmit himſelf in all things to him. The Prophet Iſaiah has taught us the ſame leſſon in theſe words: *The Lord has opened my ear, and I do not contradict him, nor have I turned away from him*, by refuſing what he commanded me to do, though it was ever ſo hard and painful, Iſ. l. 5. Ezekiel has inſtructed us in the ſame, by the figure of thoſe myſterious animals of which he writes, *That which way ſoever they perceived the impulſe of the ſpirit, that way they went, nor did they turn back as they walked*, Ezek. i. 12. The Prophet by this ſhews us, with what readineſs and joy a man ſhould do whatſoever he ſhall underſtand to be the will of God. But for the doing of this there is required, beſides a ready will, a diſcreet underſtanding and ſpirit, to prevent our being deceived, and miſtaking our own will for God's, and therefore for the moſt part we ought to ſuſpect every thing that is according to our own inclination, and look upon that as moſt ſecure that is moſt oppoſite to it.

26. This is the greateſt ſacrifice man can offer up to God, becauſe in all other ſacrifices he can offer up nothing but his goods, whereas in this he offers up himſelf; ſo that this ſacrifice is as much above all others as man is above the goods he poſſeſſes. Here that ſaying of St. Auguſtine is verified; "That though God is the Lord of all things, yet it is not for every body to uſe theſe words of David, *O Lord, I am thy ſervant*, Pſ. cxv. 16. but for thoſe only who, having quitted the poſſeſſion of themſelves, have given themſelves wholly up to the ſervice of this Lord, and are by this means become his." St. Aug. in Pſ. 118. This is the beſt diſpoſition a man can be in for the obtaining the perfection of a Chriſtian life; becauſe God, out of his infinite goodneſs, being always ready to enrich and improve man, when he does not on his ſide reſiſt nor put a ſtop to God's deſigns, but, on the contrary, readily and entirely obey him; he may eaſily work him up to what he thinks fit, and make him, like another David, a man after his own heart. 1 Reg. xiii. 14.

SECTION

SECTION VII.

Of Patience in Afflictions.

27. The laſt virtue we propoſed at the beginning of this chapter, as very neceſſary for acquiring of this laſt degree of perfection, is patience in thoſe afflictions, which our tender father often ſends us, both as a trial and for matter of merit. This it is that Solomon invites us to, in his Proverbs, by theſe words: *My ſon, refuſe not the correction of the Lord, nor be diſcouraged when thou art chaſtiſed by him. For whom the Lord loves he corrects, and takes a pleaſure in them, as a father does in his children,* Prov. iii. 11, 12. The Apoſtle explains this text, in his Epiſtle to the Hebrews, where adviſing them to patience, he ſays thus: *Endure correction with perſeverance. God deals with you herein as with ſons; for what ſon is there that is not corrected by his father? For if you want the chaſtiſement which all God's children have received, you are baſtards, and not ſons. Our fathers according to the fleſh have chaſtiſed us, and we have honoured them; ſhall we not therefore with much more reaſon obey the father of ſpirits, to the end that we may live?* Heb. xii. 7, 8, 9.

28. Theſe words ſhew us, that it is the duty of a father to correct and puniſh his children; and dutiful children will ſubmit themſelves with humility to the ſame, and look upon it as a very great favour, and as a token of fatherly love and care: This the only Son of the eternal Father has taught us by his own example, when, upon St. Peter's endeavouring to reſcue him from death, he ſaid, *Shall I not drink the Chalice which my Father has given me?* John xviii. 11. As if he had ſaid, if this Chalice had been preſented me by any body elſe, you might have had ſome reaſon for being againſt my drinking it, but ſince it comes from my Father's own hands, who knows how to aſſiſt thoſe that are his children, and at the ſame time can and will do it, why ſhall I not take it, as coming from him?

29. Yet there are ſome who, in time of proſperity, think they are ſubject to this Father, and have a perfect conformity to his will, but in time of adverſity they preſently faint, and make it appear that their reſignation and conformity were falſe, and that they were deceived in their ſubmiſſion, ſince they loſt it, when they had occaſion to make uſe of it, like cowards who boaſt in time of peace, but in fight fling down their arms and quit the field. And ſince this life is ſo ſubject

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to continual troubles and combats, it will be well to arm ſuch perſons with ſpiritual weapons, which they may make uſe of at ſuch times.

30. For this end you may, in the firſt place, conſider that the troubles of this life are nothing, if compared with the greatneſs of that glory we may purchaſe by them. For the joy this eternal glory gives us is ſo charming, that, putting the caſe we were to enjoy it but for one ſingle hour, we ſhould willingly undergo all the pains and torments we can poſſibly endure here, and depiſe all the pleaſures this world is able to afford us, for the obtaining of it. Becauſe, as the Apoſtle ſays, *Our tribulation here, which is ſo light and endures but for a moment, procures for us an ineſtimable weight of eternal glory in Heaven*, 1 Cor. iv. 17.

31. Conſider again, how frequently we are puffed with proſperity, whilſt, on the contrary, the grief cauſed by adverſity purifies our hearts; the firſt ſtate makes a man proud and haughty, whereas the other humbles him, though he was ever ſo high before; that teaches a man to forget himſelf, the ordinary effect of this is to put him in mind of God; that frequently makes us loſe the merits of our beſt actions, by this we often atone for the ſins of ſeveral years, and ſecure ourſelves againſt falling into them again for the future.

32. If you languiſh under ſickneſs, you are to perſuade yourſelf that very often, God foreſeeing what ill uſe we ſhould make of health, clips, as it were, our wings by the diſtemper he ſends, and ſo puts us out of the power of committing any ſin: ſo that it is much more to our advantage to languiſh under ſickneſs than to enjoy health, and go on in our crimes. It is much better, as our Saviour tells us, *to enter into life maimed or lame, than to have both our feet, and be caſt into everlaſting fire*, Matt. xviii. 8. It is a plain caſe that our God, who is ſo merciful, takes no pleaſure in tormenting us; his delight is to heal our infirmities, by applying of contrary remedies, that ſo we, who have got our ſickneſs by the enjoyment of pleaſures, may recover our health, by ſuffering of ſome pain; and that having been thrown down, by committing of ſuch things as are unlawful, we may riſe again by depriving ourſelves of thoſe that are lawful. Thus you ſee how God, by an effect of his infinite goodneſs, exerciſes his indignation upon us in this world, that we may happily avoid the effects of it in the next; how he uſes his ſeverity here with mercy, that he may not *pour out his wrath upon us* hereafter without it. For, as St. Jerom ſays, "God is moſt angry when he conceals his anger againſt

againſt ſinners." So that, according to this, he that is not willing to receive the correction of children now, muſt be condemned to the pains of devils hereafter. This gave St. Auguſtine a great deal of reaſon to cry out, "Burn me, O Lord, cut, flaſh and do not ſpare me in this life, that thou mayſt ſpare me for all eternity in the next." By this you may perceive how carefully the Creator of all things watches over you, by holding in the reins and not letting you follow the track of your own evil inclinations. When once a phyſician has given his patient over, he allows him to take whatever he has a mind for; but for thoſe whoſe condition is not ſo deſperate he preſcribes them their diet, and will allow them nothing that may do them any prejudice. So a father keeps his ſon ſhort when he is given to debauchery or gaming, and yet leaves him his eſtate when he dies. God, who is the Sovereign Phyſician of our ſouls and the beſt of all fathers, takes the ſame courſe with us.

33. Beſides all this, conſider what injuries and affronts our Saviour ſuffered from his own creatures; conſider how he was deſpiſed, ſcoffed at and buffeted by them; with what patience he expoſed his divine face to be ſpit upon by thoſe villains, the inſtruments of the devils; with what mildneſs he ſuffered them to pierce his head with thorns, how willingly he received the bitter potion they gave him to quench his thirſt, how ſilent he was whilſt they adored him in ſport and mockery, with what vigour, in fine, and with what patience he ran to embrace death, that he might deliver us from it. Can you then, who are nothing but a vile creature, at beſt but duſt and aſhes, think any thing hard that he ſhall be pleaſed to inflict upon you, in puniſhment of your ſins, when he himſelf has ſuffered ſo much for theſe ſame ſins of yours, and would not go out of this life but with pains and torments, though he came into it without the leaſt ſpot of ſin or imperfection? *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and ſo to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. And all this to teach us by his own practice what the Apoſtle has declared to us, *That no body is crowned without fighting lawfully*, 2 Tim. ii. 5. So that it is much better to ſuffer our preſent afflictions with patience, whilſt we may make our advantage of them, by uſing them as the means of obtaining pardon for our ſins and of encreaſing our glory, than by bearing them with impatience, make our trouble greater, and put ourſelves out of all hopes of beneſiting by them. For whether you will or not undergo them, you muſt, if God thinks fit, for there is no contradicting of his will.

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34. To all theſe conſiderations I ſhall add one more of great force and efficacy, which is, that for the preſerving of this patience a man muſt be always fortified and prepared againſt all kinds of adverſities and afflictions, which way ſoever they come. For how can any one expect to be better treated by a world ſo full of corruption and vice, by a fleſh ſo weak and frail, by the devils that are ſo envious, and by his fellow-creatures that are ſo malicious? All he is to look for from them are continual perſecutions, and unexpected aſſaults and onſets. It is the part of a prudent man to be always in a readineſs againſt ſuch encounters and accidents as theſe, as he would do if he were paſſing through an enemy's country, and in ſo doing he will find two extraordinary conveniencies. The firſt is, he will undergo all his troubles the better, being thus forearmed; becauſe, as Seneca ſays, "A blow never falls half ſo heavy as it would do, when we ſee it coming at a diſtance." And Eccleſiaſticus gives us the ſame advice, when he ſays, *Apply a remedy before you are ſick*, Eccl. xviii. 20. The other advantage is, that as often as a man does ſo he is ſenſible he offers a ſacrifice to God, much like that of the Patriarch Abraham, which he was going to make of his ſon Iſaac. Gen. xxii. For whenſoever a man conſiders with himſelf that he may meet with ſuch or ſuch troubles and contradictions, either from God or men, whenſoever he prepares himſelf for receiving of them with humility and patience, reſigning himſelf entirely into the hands of God, accepting of all things from what part ſoever they come, as if he himſelf had ſent them, as David did when Simei affronted him, he cannot but be perſuaded, that whilſt he does this, he offers up a moſt acceptable ſervice to God, and merits as much by his good will and readineſs, though he does nothing at all, as if he had done all he was prepared to do. 2 Reg. xvi.

35. For this reaſon it concerns us to remember that this is one of the moſt eſſential obligations of a Chriſtian. St. Peter aſſures us of it, when he ſays, *Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, knowing that you are thereunto called*, 1 Pet. iii. 9, 14. Every Chriſtian then ſhould conſider that as long as he lives in the world he is like a rock in the ſea, which is perpetually expoſed to the violence of the waves, and yet ſtill keeps its place, though they are always beating againſt it. I have been ſo copious upon this matter, becauſe a Chriſtian's whole duty, according to what St. Bernard ſays, conſiſt in theſe two things, "To do good, and to ſuffer injuries." S. Bern. Serm. 1. Apoſt. Pet. & Pauli. There is no doubt but it

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is eaſier to comply with the firſt than with the ſecond, and therefore it is requiſite we ſhould give moſt caution where there is the greateſt danger.

36. But it is obſervable by the by, that in this virtue of patience holy writers tell us there are three degrees, each of which is more perfect than the other. The firſt of them is, the bearing of afflictions patiently; the ſecond is, the deſiring of them for the love of Chriſt; and the third, the taking a delight in them upon the ſame account. So that it is not enough for a man that ſerves God to take up with the firſt degree only, when he has attained that he muſt aim at the ſecond; and not ſtop there neither till he comes to the laſt. We have a very good example of the firſt degree in the patience of holy Job. The deſire ſeveral of the martyrs had of ſuffering furniſhes us with an example of the ſecond; and the joy which the apoſtles had in being found worthy to ſuffer affronts for the name of Chriſt, is an evident proof of the laſt, Job i. ii. This is the degree the Apoſtle had arrived to, when he ſaid in one place, *That he glories in his tribulations.* And in another, *That he will rejoice in his tribulations, afflictions, ſtripes,* &c. *which he had ſuffered for Chriſt,* Act. v. Rom. v. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 12. Speaking elſewhere of his impriſonment, he deſires the Philippians to ſhare with him in the joy he has to ſee himſelf in chains for the name of Chriſt. Phil. ii. And he tells us the ſame favour was granted to the faithful of Macedonia; ſo that they had a great deal of comfort amidſt the heavy afflictions they were oppreſſed with. This is the higheſt degree of patience, charity and perfection, a creature can poſſibly attain to, and which very few arrive at, and therefore God does not lay this obligation upon any body, by way of precept, any more than he does the former.

37. From what has been ſaid we are not to imagine that we muſt rejoice at the deaths, misfortunes, or afflictions of our neighbours; much leſs at thoſe of our friends, or relations; and leaſt of all at thoſe of the church; becauſe the ſame charity which commands us to rejoice in one caſe, obliges us to be ſorry and compaſſionate in the other. For it is charity that knows how to rejoice with thoſe that rejoice, and to weep with thoſe that weep, as we ſee the holy prophets did, who ſpent their whole lives in lamenting and bewailing the miſeries of men, and the puniſhments they groaned under.

38. Whoſoever therefore, to conclude, ſhall have obtained theſe nine qualities or virtues, will have the heart of a child towards

wards God, and cannot but have thoroughly complied with this laſt and principal obligation of juſtice, which is to give God whatſoever is due to him.

CHAP. V.

Of the Obligations of particular States and Callings.

1. AFTER having ſpoken of the duties of all ſorts of perſons in general, it would do well to ſhew now what is moſt proper for every one in particular, according to his condition and employment. But becauſe this would be too tedious, I ſhall content myſelf at preſent with a word or two, in ſhort, to ſhew how highly it concerns each particular perſon, over and above what I have ſaid already, to have a regard to the laws and obligations of the ſtate he is in. Now theſe laws are many and different, according to the different callings there are in the church. For ſome are appointed to command, and it is the buſineſs of others to obey; ſome are married, others are religious, others are maſters of families, &c. Now every one of theſe conditions has its particular obligations.

2. As to thoſe that have the charge of government, the Apoſtle adviſes them to be *watchful in all things, to take pains, and to diſcharge their duties*, 2 Tim. iv. 5. And Solomon gives the ſame advice, when he ſays, *My ſon, if you are bound for your friend, and have engaged yourſelf for another man, you are bound by your own words, and are taken by your own ſpeech. Do therefore, my ſon, what I ſay, and diſengage yourſelf. Run, make haſte, waken your friend, let not your eyes ſleep, and give no reſt to your eyelids; ſave thy ſelf as a doe from the hands of the hunter, and as a bird from the hands of the fowler*, Prov. vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Do not wonder at the wiſe man's requiring ſo much ſolicitude in a matter of ſuch concern as this. For it is uſual for men to take a great deal of care in thoſe things they are entruſted with, upon two accounts, either becauſe of the value of them, or elſe becauſe of the danger they are expoſed to. Now both theſe reaſons are ſo ſtrong in the concern of our ſouls, that there is nothing can be of greater value nor in more danger; and therefore much care muſt be taken in looking after them.

3. The buſineſs of a ſubject or inferior is to look upon his ſuperior, not as a man but as God himſelf, ſo that he muſt have

have the ſame reſpect for him as he has for God, and ſhould do whatſoever he bids him with the ſame readineſs he would do it had God himſelf commanded it. For if the maſter, whoſe ſervice I am in, ſhould bid me obey his houſekeeper or his ſteward, who is it I obey in obeying the ſteward, but the maſter himſelf? If God therefore commands me to obey my ſuperior, it is not ſo much my ſuperior that I obey as God himſelf, when I do whatſoever is ordered me. And if St. Paul would have a ſervant ſubmit to and reſpect his maſter, not as a man but as Jeſus Chriſt, how much more reaſonable is it for an inferior to obey his ſuperior, when obedience is the tie of his obligation? Eph. viii. 5.

4. There are three degrees in this obedience, the firſt is to obey in action only, the ſecond is to obey both in action and will, and the third in action, will and underſtanding. For ſome do what is commanded them, yet neither do they like what they do, nor do it with a good will. Others do it with a good will, but ſtill diſapprove of what they do; others there are, in fine, who, *captivating their underſtanding to the ſervice of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. x. 5. obey their ſuperior as they would do God himſelf in action, word and underſtanding, doing whatever he orders them, with cheerfulneſs and readineſs, with humility approving of it, without ſitting as judges over thoſe to whom they themſelves are anſwerable. You muſt therefore make it your buſineſs to obey your ſuperiors all theſe three different ways, remembering that our Saviour ſays, *He that hears you hears me, and he that deſpiſes you deſpiſes me*, Luke x. 16. Never murmur or ſay any thing againſt them, that they may never have occaſion to tell you, *It is not againſt us that you murmur, but againſt the Lord*, Exod. xvi. 8. Deſpiſe them not, for fear God himſelf ſhould ſay to them, *They have not deſpiſed you but me, that I ſhould not reign over them*, 1 Reg. viii. 7. Treat them with all kind of truth and ſincerity, that nobody may upbraid you ſaying, *You have not lied to men, but to God*, Acts v. 4. and leſt, like Ananias and Sapphira, you be puniſhed with ſudden death for your raſhneſs.

5. Let the married woman look to the government of her houſe, and take care of her family, pleaſe her huſband, and do all that a wife ſhould do; when ſhe has ſatisfied theſe obligations, let her ſpend the reſt of her time in devotion as much as ſhe pleaſes, but ſtill let her remember that the duties of her ſtate call upon her firſt.

6. Let thoſe that are fathers of children frequently reflect upon the ſevere puniſhment that was inflicted upon Heli, for

his neglect in chaſtiſing and inſtructing his ſons, 1 Reg. iv. This omiſſion of his, God puniſhed not only with his own and his children's ſudden death, but with the loſs of the high prieſthood, which was removed for ever after from his family. Conſider that the ſins of the children are in ſome manner imputed to the fathers, and that the ruin of a ſon is very often the cauſe of his father's deſtruction: nor does he deſerve the bare name of a father, who, after having begotten his ſon for this world, does not alſo beget him for the next. Let him correct him, reprove him, adviſe him, keep him out of bad company, and ſeek good maſters for him; let him train him up in virtue, and inſtruct him, like Tobias, from his very infancy to fear God, Tob. iv; let him break him of his own will and inclinations; and ſince, before his birth he was his father according to the fleſh, he muſt, now he is born, be his father according to the ſpirit. For it is againſt reaſon that a man ſhould do no more of the duty of a father than birds and beaſts do, whoſe only buſineſs is to feed and maintain their young ones. Man muſt behave himſelf in this matter like a man, nay, like a Chriſtian, like a faithful ſervant of God. He is to bring his child up ſo as that he may be the child of God and an heir of Heaven, not a ſlave to the devil and an inhabitant of hell.

7. Maſters of families that have ſervants ſhould remember what St. Paul ſays, *If a man does not take care of thoſe that are under him, and eſpecially of thoſe that are of his own family, he has denied his faith, and is worſe than an infidel*, Tim. v. 8. They are to conſider that thoſe of their family are like ſheep of their flock, and that they are the ſhepherds and keepers, eſpecially of thoſe that are their ſervants. Let them not forget that the time will come when they muſt give an account of them, when they ſhall be aſked, *Where is the flock that was committed to your charge, and the noble herd that you had the care of?* It was properly called *noble*, becauſe of the price of its redemption, and the moſt ſacred humanity of Chriſt, by which it has been ennobled; ſince there is no ſlave ſo mean that has not received both his liberty and nobility from the humanity and blood of Chriſt. It is therefore the duty of a good Chriſtian to be particularly watchful over thoſe of his family, and to keep them from all kinds of open ſins, as quarrelling, gaming, ſwearing, curſing, &c. but above all, from ſins of impurity. He muſt, beſides all this, endeavour to inſtruct them in the principles of religion; he muſt make them obſerve the commandments of the church, particularly that of hearing Maſs upon

upon Sundays and Holidays; of faſting upon all the vigils and other appointed faſting days in the year, unleſs, as we have ſaid already, there be ſome lawful excuſe for their not complying with theſe precepts.

CHAP. VI.

Firſt Advice upon the Eſteem we are to have of the different Virtues, for the better Underſtanding the Rule of a good Life.

1. AS, at the beginning of this treatiſe, I ſet down ſome neceſſary præcognita, by way of advance; ſo it is convenient here, now we are drawing to a concluſion, to give ſome advice for the clearer underſtanding of all that is contained in it. Firſt, therefore, it is neceſſary, after having treated of ſeveral kinds of virtues, to ſhew how much one virtue is more excellent than another, that ſo we may know what value to put upon every one, and to eſteem it according to its true worth. For as it is requiſite that a man who trades in jewels ſhould know what rate they bear, that he may not be deceived in the value of them, and as it is convenient for the ſteward of a great man's houſe to know the merits of all in the family, that each perſon may be treated according to his deſerts, (for otherwiſe there will be nothing but perpetual confuſion and diſorder) ſo he that trades in the jewels of virtue, and he that, like a faithful ſteward, is for giving every one what is his due, ſhould be well acquainted with the value of them, that whenſoever they are ſet together he may know which to give the preference to, leſt he ſhould gather chaff and ſcatter the grain.

2. You are therefore to underſtand that all thoſe virtues we have hitherto treated of may be ranked into two claſſes; for ſome of them are more ſpiritual and inward, and others more viſible and outward. In the firſt claſs are contained the theological virtues, with all the others which have God for their object; but charity, as queen of the reſt, has the firſt place. To theſe we may add ſeveral other very excellent virtues, and which are much like the former, as humility, chaſtity, mercy, patience, diſcretion, devotion, poverty of ſpirit, contempt of the world, a denying of our own will, a love of the croſs, and of Chriſt's mortifications, with many other ſuch virtues, which we call virtues in this place, taking the word in the

largeſt ſignification. We call them ſpiritual and inward virtues, becauſe it is the ſpirit they chiefly reſide in, though they extend themſelves even to outward works, as appears particularly in charity, and in the worſhip of God, which, notwithſtanding their being inward virtues, work outwardly for the honour and glory of the ſame God.

3. There are other more viſible and outward virtues, as faſting, diſcipline, ſilence, retirement, pious reading, prayer, ſinging of pſalms, pilgrimages, hearing of Maſs, aſſiſting at ſermons and at the Divine office, with all the other outward obſervances and ceremonies of a Chriſtian or religious life. For though theſe virtues are all of them in the ſoul, yet their effects appear more outward than thoſe of other virtues do which are often occult and inviſible; as to believe, to love, to hope, to contemplate, to be inwardly humbled, to have ſorrow for a man's ſins, to judge diſcreetly, and the like.

4. There is no doubt but that the firſt of theſe two kinds of virtues are much more excellent and neceſſary than the ſecond. For as our Saviour ſaid to the Samaritan woman, *Woman, believe me, the hour is come that thoſe who are the true adorers ſhall adore the Father in ſpirit and truth, for the Father looks for ſuch to adore him. God is a Spirit; and therefore they that adore him, muſt adore him in ſpirit and truth*, John iv. 23. This is, in plain terms, no more than what little children repeat ſo often at ſchool, in theſe two noted verſes:—

Si Deus eſt animus, nobis ut Carmina dicunt,
Hic tibi præcipue ſit pura mente colendus. CATO.

If God, as poets ſay, a Spirit be,
He muſt in ſpirit be adored by thee.

For this reaſon David, deſcribing the beauty of the church, ſays, that *all her glory is within, her garments are of cloth of gold, and of ſeveral colours*, Pſ. xliv. 13. The Apoſtle expreſſes the ſame thing to us, when he ſays, *Accuſtom yourſelf to piety, for bodily exerciſe is good but for little, but piety is profitable for all things, and has a promiſe of the goods both of this life and of the next*, 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8. By piety here we are to underſtand the worſhip of God, and charity towards our neighbour; and by the exerciſe of the body, abſtinence and other corporal auſterities, according to St. Thomas upon this place.

5. This is a truth which the Heathen philoſophers were not ignorant of; and Ariſtotle, though he has not written much

much concerning the gods, ſays, that if the gods take any notice of our concerns, as it is to be believed they do, it is very probable they are moſt pleaſed with that which is the beſt and comes the neareſt to them; which is, man's ſpirit or underſtanding. For this reaſon they who take care to beautify and adorn their ſouls with the knowledge of this truth, and with the reformation of their deſires and paſſions, muſt without doubt be moſt acceptable to God. Galen, the great phyſician, was of the ſame opinion; for in his book of the Compoſition and Structure of Man's Body, and the Uſe of its Parts, coming to a paſſage which particularly demonſtrated the ſingular wiſdom and providence of God, the ſovereign artiſt, he was ſtruck with admiration at ſo many wonders, and forgetting, as it were, his phyſic, turned to divinity, and broke out into theſe expreſſions: "Let others offer up their hecatombs (they were ſacrifices uſed by the ancients of an hundred oxen) to the Gods; I will honour them by a profound acknowledgment of the greatneſs of their wiſdom, by which they have ſo wonderfully diſpoſed of all things; I will reverence them by confeſſing the greatneſs of their power, by which they have been able to execute their own pleaſure; I will worſhip them, by admiring the greatneſs of their love, which has refuſed the creatures nothing, ſince they have beſtowed upon every one of them in particular, whatſoever was neceſſary, and left them nothing to deſire farther." L. 3. de uſu partium. Theſe are the words of a Heathen philoſopher; and what, I pray, could a Chriſtian have ſaid beyond this? eſpecially after having read this expreſſion of the Prophet: *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice; and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings*, Oſe. 6. Change but the word *hecatombs* into *holocauſts*, and you will find the philoſopher and the prophet agree upon this matter.

6. But notwithſtanding the excellency of theſe virtues, thoſe of the ſecond claſs are very uſeful (though not ſo noble as the former) for the acquiring and preſerving of thoſe that are greater; ſome of them are neceſſary either becauſe of the precept, or of the vow that goes along with them. This is made out by reflecting on thoſe virtues we have mentioned. For retirement and ſolitude put a man out of the way of ſeeing, hearing and talking of a thouſand things that will endanger, not only his peace and quiet of conſcience, but his chaſtity and innocence. We are all ſenſible what a help ſilence is for preſerving of devotion and avoiding of thoſe ſins, which men fall into by talking; and the Wiſe Man has told us, *That*

where

where there is much talk ſin will not be wanting, Prov. x. 19. As for faſting, beſides its being an effect of the virtue of temperance and a ſatisfactory and meritorious work, if it be done with charity, it enervates the body, it lifts up the ſpirit, it weakens our enemy, and diſpoſes us for prayer, pious reading and contemplations; it keeps us out of thoſe exceſſes and debaucheries occaſioned by eating and drinking, and preſerves us from all thoſe ſcurrilous jeſts and buffooneries, quarrels and riots, which generally follow merriments and revels. As to thoſe other virtues of reading good books, hearing of ſermons, praying, ſinging, and aſſiſting at the offices of the church, it is plain they are all acts of religion, incitements to devotion, and ſerve to enlighten our underſtandings, and to make our wills more inflamed with the deſire of ſpiritual things.

7. Experience makes this point ſo clear, that had our adverſaries conſidered it, they would never have run into the contrary extremes: for we daily ſee that in thoſe monaſteries, where regular diſcipline is more exact and where the exterior obſervances are better complied with, there is always more virtue, more devotion, more charity, more ſtrength and vigour, in the members of them, and the fear of God and Chriſtianity is better encouraged and promoted. Whereas in thoſe houſes where theſe things are leſs regarded, and where the exterior diſcipline their rules oblige to, is grown looſe, conſcience, good manners and a holy life follow the ſame courſe, and fall to ruin; becauſe where the occaſions of ſinning are more, there ſins and diſorders are alſo more frequent. So that the obſervances of a religious ſtate may be properly compared to a vine, which if it be well fenced in and encloſed, is out of all danger of being ſpoiled, but otherwiſe its fruit will be expoſed to every one that paſſes by. It is even ſo with a religious order that has once fallen from the rigour and auſterity of its rule. Then what clearer proof than this, which is grounded upon daily experience of the advantage and importance of theſe virtues.

8. How is it poſſible now for a man, that propoſes to himſelf the acquiring and preſerving of this ſovereign virtue of devotion, which capacitates and enables him for all other virtues, and is, as it were, an incentive and ſpur to all kind of good, ever to obtain his end, whilſt he watches ſo careleſly over himſelf, eſpecially when the virtue he aims at is ſo far above his ſtrength as it is, and ſo pure and perfect? For it is ſo nice, and, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, ſo volatile, that a man can ſcarce look back but it is gone. An exceſs of laughter,

laughter, a ſuperfluous word, a greater meal than ordinary, a little paſſion, a ſmall diſpute, or any other diſtraction whatſoever; the deſire of ſeeing, hearing or thinking of things not to our purpoſe, though not bad, are enough to ſpoil the better part of our devotion. So that not only our ſins, but unneceſſary employs, and any thing that can divert us from thinking on God, draws us away from it. For as iron, to be changed into the ſubſtance of fire, muſt always be in it, or at leaſt but ſeldom out of it, for fear of returning to its natural coldneſs again, ſo this noble virtue depends ſo much upon man's being always united to God by an actual love and reflection, that if he but thinks of any thing elſe he caſts himſelf back again into his natural corruption, that is, into the old diſpoſition he had at firſt.

9. It concerns him therefore that has a mind to procure this virtue, and to keep it when he has it, to watch ſo carefully over himſelf, that is, over his eyes, his ears, his tongue and his heart; it concerns him to be ſo temperate in his meals, to be ſo regular in all his words and notions, to be ſo much a friend to ſilence and ſolitude, to make it ſo much his buſineſs to be preſent at the ſervice of the church, and to do all thoſe things which ſhall excite him to devotion, that he may by means of this care and diligence be able to ſecure to himſelf the poſſeſſion of ſo great a treaſure as this is. If he does not do this, let him look upon it as moſt certain he ſhall never ſucceed in this point.

10. All this may ſufficiently convince us of the importance of theſe virtues, without leſſening the value of the nobler. Whence we may gather the difference there is between them, for theſe are, as it were, the end, thoſe the means of attaining it; theſe are like health, thoſe like medicines proper for procuring of it; theſe are, in a manner, the ſpirit of religion, and thoſe the body, which, though it is inferior to the ſpirit, is a chief part of the compound, and neceſſary becauſe of its operations; theſe are like the treaſure, and thoſe like the key that ſecures it; theſe are, as it were, the fruit of the tree, and thoſe the leaves that adorn the tree and preſerve the fruit. Though this compariſon does not anſwer exactly, becauſe the leaves of a tree are no part of the fruit, though they preſerve it; but theſe virtues ſecure juſtice ſo as at the ſame time to make up a part of it, ſince they are all of them virtuous actions and worthy of grace and glory, if done with perfect charity.

11. This

11. This is the eſteem you are to ſet upon the virtues we have been here diſcourſing of, which is what we propoſed at the beginning of the chapter; this doctrine will ſecure us againſt two vicious extremes, that is, two notorious errors there have been in the world as to this affair: the firſt an ancient one, of the Phariſees; the other is a late one, of the heretics of our times. For the Phariſees, like carnal and ambitious men, and brought up in the obſervance of the law, which as yet was carnal, made no account of true juſtice, which conſiſts in ſpiritual virtues, as we may ſee throughout the whole courſe of the goſpel; ſo that, as the Apoſtle ſays, *they had the appearance indeed of piety, but wanted the ſubſtance*, 2 Tim. iii. 5. you might have taken them for good men by the outſide, though they were full of abomination and filth within. But our preſent heretics, on the contrary, being ſenſible of this error, to avoid one extreme ran into another, which was ſplitting upon Scylla to avoid Charybdis. But the true Catholic doctrine ſhuns both theſe extremes, and ſeeks virtue in the mean, taking care to give the inward virtues the firſt and beſt place, without ſuffering the outward to loſe the rank that is due to them. It places ſome, as it were, in the rank of the nobility, and others among the gentry and commonalty, which compoſe this commonwealth, that the value of every thing may be known, and each have as much as is its due.

CHAP. VII.

Of four neceſſary Inſtructions that follow upon this Doctrine.

1. FROM what has been ſaid may be drawn four important inſtructions for the ſpiritual life. The firſt is, that he who ſerves God as he ought to do is not to content himſelf with ſeeking after ſpiritual virtues only, though they are the moſt excellent, but muſt add the others to them; and this as well for the preſerving of the firſt, as for the arriving at the height and perfection of all juſtice. To this purpoſe he is to conſider, that as man conſiſts not of either ſoul alone or of body alone, but of both together, becauſe the ſoul alone without the body is not a complete man, and the body without the ſoul is nothing but a lump of earth, true and perfect Chriſtianity is neither only interior nor only exterior, but both at once;

once; becauſe there is no preſerving the interior without ſomething at leaſt, if not a great deal, of the exterior, according to every one's ſtate and condition, nor is it enough for the performing of perfect juſtice. And as to the exterior without the interior, it goes no farther towards making a virtuous man than the body without the ſoul does to the making of a natural man. So that as the body receives its whole life and being from the ſoul, ſo the exterior depends after the ſame manner upon the interior, and moſt of all upon charity for all the eſteem and value it has.

2. He therefore that would be undeceived muſt no more ſeparate the corporal from the ſpiritual, in order to make a perfect Chriſtian, than he is to divide the body from the ſoul, for the making a complete man. Let him take the body and ſoul together, the treaſure and the cheſt, the fence and the vine; let him take all his ſupports and props along with it, for they are all to go together, or he will loſe both; for he will not be able to obtain the one part, and the other without it will not avail him. Let him conſider, that ſince neither nature nor art which copies after nature, produces any work without giving it an outſide and cloathing, and without giving it a defence and ſtay, both for its preſervation and beauty; it is repugnant to reaſon to think that grace, which is a much more perfect form than the others are, and which operates much better, ſhould not do as much as they do. Let him reflect upon this ſentence: *He that fears God, deſpiſes nothing; and he that contemns little things, will fall by degrees into great ones*, Eccl. vii. 19. Let him call to mind what he ſaid before, that for want of a nail a man loſes a ſhoe, and for want of a ſhoe his horſe. Let him conſider the danger he runs in not taking notice of ſmall things, becauſe it is the ready way for him not to mind the greater. Let him but think upon the flies that ſucceeded the gnats in the plagues of Egypt; that this may teach him how the neglect of leſſer things makes way for that of greater, Exod. viii. For he who does not regard the ſtinging of gnats ſhall be ſoon troubled with flies, that will over-run him with filth and naſtineſs.

SECTION I.

The ſecond Inſtruction.

3. By this it will appear about what virtues we are to be moſt ſolicitous, and which require leſs care. For as men will do

do more for a piece of gold than for a piece of ſilver, and more for an eye than for a finger, ſo it is convenient we ſhould take moſt care to purchaſe and keep thoſe virtues that are the moſt excellent. For if we are diligent in that which is of leaſt moment, and careleſs in that which is of moſt, all our ſpiritual affairs will be diſorderly. It is therefore a great piece of prudence in ſuperiors, in their chapters and public aſſemblies, to recommend to their religious the obſervance of ſilence, faſting, ſolitude, ceremonies, modeſty and the choir; and to be much more zealous in adviſing them to charity, humility, prayer, devotion, meditation, the fear of God, the love of their neighbours, and the like. And this latter part is ſo much the more neceſſary than the other, by how much the inward failings are more private than the outward, and therefore the more dangerous. For as men are more apt to remedy the defects they ſee than thoſe they do not ſee, it is a hazard they may thus come to make no account of the inward failings, becauſe they are not ſeen, though they may take much notice of the outward, becauſe they appear: Beſides the exterior virtues, as abſtinence, watching, diſciplines, corporal auſterities and mortifications, are more viſible to others, and therefore more familiar to and more eſteemed by them; whilſt hope, charity, humility, diſcretion, the fear of God, the contempt of the world, and the reſt of the interior virtues, are leſs in credit with the world, becauſe they appear leſs outwardly, though at the ſame time they are much more acceptable to God than the others. Our Saviour himſelf gave us the reaſon of this difference of opinions, when he ſaid, *You juſtify yourſelves before men, but God knows your hearts*, Luke xvi. 15. And the Apoſtle tells us to the ſame purpoſe, *He is not a Jew that is a Jew outwardly, nor is that circumciſion which appears outwardly in the fleſh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and the circumciſion of the heart, which conſiſts in the ſpirit and not in the letter, is true circumciſion, whoſe praiſe comes not from men, but from God*, Rom. ii. 28, 29. for men have not eyes to ſee this ſpiritual circumciſion. Since then theſe outward things are ſo manifeſt and ſo much in vogue, and the deſire of honour and praiſe is one of the cunningeſt and moſt powerful paſſions a man has, there is more danger of being carried away by this paſſion to the conſideration and purſuit of thoſe virtues, which are moſt in eſteem amongſt men, than of being wrought upon to a deſire of thoſe that appear leſs honourable, becauſe it is the ſpirit that calls us to the love of theſe, but the ſpirit and fleſh together invite us to ſearch after thoſe, and the fleſh is

eager

eager and ſubtle in purſuing all its appetites. This being ſo, we have all the reaſon in the world to fear that two ſuch powerful paſſions as theſe, will eaſily prevail againſt one, and force it to quit the field. This diſorder may be remedied by the light of this doctrine, which always pleads for the juſter ſide, and ſtands up for maintaining of its right, notwithſtanding all theſe obſtructions, and is moſt zealous in recommending that to us which we cannot but ſee to be of the greater importance.

SECTION II.

The third Inſtruction.

4. Another thing to be learned hence is, the obligation we have of following the rule of God's commandments, in the concurrence of two virtues, which cannot poſſibly be both embraced, for this will happen ſometimes, and in ſuch a caſe we muſt give the preference to the moſt worthy of the two, to avoid confuſion and trouble. This is what St. Bernard teaches us, in his Book of Diſpenſation. "There are (ſays he) a great many laws enacted, not becauſe men could not have lived without them, but becauſe they ſerved much more for the obtaining and preſerving of charity. Therefore they are to remain in their force and vigour without change as long as they anſwer this end; nor can they themſelves who have the power to do it make any innovation in this kind, without giving offence. But if at any time they ſhould prove deſtructive to charity, who can think it would not be conſonant to juſtice, and moſt for the increaſe of charity too, to omit, defer, change for the better, or aboliſh, with the conſent of thoſe perſons who have the authority in their hands, ſuch laws as were inſtituted for the maintaining of charity, when once they are perceived to be prejudicial to it? For it would certainly be a point of injuſtice to obſerve thoſe laws, which were made in the behalf of charity, if ever they happen to prove otherwiſe. It is requiſite therefore that thoſe who are in command ſhould look upon theſe things as unchangeable and irrevocable, as long as they are uſeful for the keeping up of this virtue, and no longer." Orat. de Præcepto & Diſpenſ. c. 4. Theſe are St. Bernard's own words, who produces two decrees, one of Pope Gelaſius and the other of Pope Leo, in proof of what he here aſſerts.

SECTION

SECTION III.

The fourth Inſtruction.

5. We may gather from what has been ſaid that there are two ſorts of juſtice, a true and a falſe one. The true one is, that which embraces the interior virtues, and with them the exterior, that are neceſſary for the keeping of them. The falſe one is, that which lays hold of ſome of the exterior virtues, without meddling with the interior; that is, without the love of God, without fear, humility, devotion, and the like. The Phariſees were as juſt as this comes to, and no more; and therefore our Saviour ſays to them, *Woe unto you, hypocritical Scribes and Phariſees, who pay the tithes of your mint, your aniſeed and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith,* Matt. xxiii. 23. He upbraids them again ſoon after, with theſe words: *Woe unto you, hypocritical Scribes and Phariſees, who make the outſide of your cups and diſhes clean, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanneſs,* Ibid. ver. 25. And immediately again: *Woe unto you, hypocritical Scribes and Phariſees, for you are like unto painted ſepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead mens bones and all ſorts of filthineſs,* Ibid. ver. 27.

6. Such juſtice as this is we find frequently condemned by God himſelf, in the writings of the Prophets. In one of them he ſays, *This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; and they fear me, becauſe of the laws and inſtitutions of men,* Iſa. xxix. 14. And in another place he ſays, *Why do you offer me ſo many ſacrifices? I am quite tired with them. I have no pleaſure in the burnt-offerings of rams, and in the fattening of beaſts, in the blood of calves, of lambs and of goats. Offer me no more oblations, for it is but loſt labour; your incenſe is an abomination to me; I will not bear with your new moons, and ſabbaths, and ſolemn meetings; your public aſſemblies are wicked; they are troubleſome to me; I cannot abide them,* Iſa. i. 11, 13, 14.

7. What, does God find fault with what he himſelf ſo ſtrictly commanded? Nay, even when they are acts of religion, which of all virtues is the nobleſt, ſince its buſineſs is to worſhip God with works of adoration and piety? Certainly it cannot be the virtue he condemns, but the men that content themſelves with outward obligations, and neglect true juſtice and the fear of God. For he himſelf declares immediately after that it is nothing elſe that diſpleaſes him. *Waſh yourſelves, make yourſelves clean, put away your evil thoughts out of my ſight,*

and

and ceaſe from doing of evil, and learn to do well, and then though your ſins were red as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; and though they were like purple, they ſhall be as white as wool, Ibid. ver. 16, 17, 18.

8. He expreſſes the ſame thing again with much more vehemence elſewhere. *He that ſacrifices an ox to me is like him that kills a man; he that ſacrifices a ſheep is like him that tears a dog in pieces; he that makes an offering to me is like him that offers up ſwines blood, and he that offers me incenſe is like him that ſacrifices to an idol*, Iſa. lxvi. 3. What can be the meaning of this, O Lord, what kind of prodigy is here? Why are thoſe things, which you yourſelf have commanded, ſo abominable to you? He gives us the reaſon of it when he ſays, *They have made choice of all theſe things in their ways, and their ſoul is delighted in their abominations*, Ibid. You ſee here then what ſmall account God makes of exterior things, when they are not grounded upon the interior. To give us a proof of this he ſays by another Prophet, *Take away from me the noiſe of your ſongs; for I will not hear the melody of your harps*, Amos v. 23. And in another place he ſays, expreſſing his diſpleaſure in more lively terms, *I will ſling the dung of your ſolemn feaſts into your faces*, Mal. iii. What need is there, after all this, of ſaying any more to ſhew how little all exterior things amount to, let them be ever ſo noble and great in themſelves, if the love and fear of God and a horror of ſin, which are the very foundations of juſtice, be wanting?

9. Should you aſk me, what can be the reaſon of God's diſliking theſe kinds of ſervice, of his comparing ſacrifice with manſlaughter, and incenſe with idolatry, of his calling the ſinging of pſalms *a noiſe*, and ſolemn feaſt and meetings *dung*? I anſwer, becauſe theſe things, for want of the foundation we have ſpoken of, beſides their being of no worth or eſteem, give occaſion to many to be proud and haughty, to preſume upon themſelves and to contemn every body elſe that does not do as they do; and what is worſt of all, this falſe juſtice ſettles them in a falſe ſecurity in the way they are in, which is one of the greateſt dangers they can fall into; becauſe they are ſo ſatisfied with what they have that they aim at nothing farther. Do but conſider the Phariſee's prayer in the goſpel. *I thank you, O God, that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or as this publican is; I faſt twice a week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs*, Luke xviii. 11, 12. You may eaſily diſcover in this prayer the three dangerous rocks we have ſpoken of; you may plainly ſee his preſumption, when he ſays, *I am not like other men*; his contempt of others, n theſe words, *I am not as this publican*; and his

his falſe ſecurity, *In his thanking God for the life he led*, whilſt he imagined all was ſafe, and that he had nothing to be afraid of.

10. Hence ſprings a dangerous kind of hypocriſy, which theſe falſe juſt men run into. For the underſtanding of this, you are to know that there are two ſorts of hypocriſy; the one is baſe and palpable, and is of thoſe who know they are wicked, and outwardly appear good, to deceive the world. The other ſort is more nice and ſubtle, which makes a man even deceive himſelf as well as others, like the Phariſee, who really cheated himſelf and not others only, under the cover of juſtice, by imagining himſelf to be a holy man, though at the ſame time he was a very great ſinner. This kind of hypocriſy the Wiſe Man points at, in theſe words: *There is a way that ſeems juſt to man, but the end of it leads to death*, Prov. xiv. 12. And in another place, ſpeaking of four kinds of evils that are in the world, reckons this for one of them. *There is a generation that curſes their father, and that does not bleſs their mother. There is a generation that think themſelves clean, and yet is not cleanſed from their filthineſs. There is a generation that has a proud look, and that turn up their eyelids. There is a generation whoſe teeth are as ſwords, and who devour the poor from the earth with their jaws*, Pro. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14. The Wiſe Man looks upon theſe four ſorts of perſons as the moſt infamous and moſt dangerous in the world; and amongſt them he puts thoſe that are hypocrites in regard of themſelves, who fancy they are clean, when they are as far from being ſo as the Phariſee was.

11. This condition is ſo dangerous that, to ſpeak the truth, it is not half ſo bad for a man to be a ſinner, and to know he is ſuch, as it is to be juſt after this manner, and to live in a falſe ſecurity. Becauſe let a man be ever ſo ſick, the knowing of his diſtemper is a fair way to his recovery; but when a man fancies himſelf to be well, though he is much out of order, there will be no perſuading him to take any medicine to cure him. For this reaſon our Saviour told the Phariſees, *That publicans and harlots ſhould go before them into the kingdom of Heaven*, Matth. xxi. 31. The Greek tranſlation, inſtead of *ſhall go before*, reads *do go before*, which is a ſtronger proof of what we affirm. This is what we are told much more plainly by our Saviour himſelf in thoſe obſcure but terrible words, in the Apocalypſe: *I wiſh you were either cold or hot, but becauſe you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth*, Apoc. iii. 15, 16. How is it poſſible God ſhould wiſh a man were cold? And how is it poſſible that a man that is cold ſhould be in a better condition than one that is lukewarm, ſince the

the latter is nearer being warm than the other? The reaſon is this:—He that is hot is the man that has got the fire of charity, and with all thoſe virtues both interior and exterior that we have ſpoken of; the cold man is he who has neither the one ſort nor the other, becauſe he has no charity. And the lukewarm is he that has ſome of the exterior virtues, but wants the interior, or at leaſt charity. Now our Saviour would have us know that this man's condition is more dangerous than his is that is quite cold, not becauſe he has more ſins than the other, but becauſe his evil is much more incurable; for the greater ſecurity he imagines himſelf to be in, the farther he is from applying any remedies. So that this ſuperficial and outſide juſtice of his makes him believe he is ſomething, whereas in reality he is nothing at all. We need but read what follows to know it is the genuine and literal ſenſe of the text. For our Saviour, ſpeaking more clearly to him whom he had called lukewarm before, ſays, *You ſay that you are rich and wealthy, and want nothing; and you know not that you are wretched and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, Ibid. xvii. Is not this the Phariſee drawn to the life, who ſaid, *God, I thank you that I am not like other men?* Luke xviii. 11. This without doubt was he that thought himſelf rich in ſpiritual treaſures, becauſe he thanked God as if he was ſo, and yet he was poor, naked and blind, becauſe he was empty of all interior juſtice, full of pride, and ſo blind that he could not ſee his own failings.

12. We have made it appear thus far that there are two ſorts of juſtice, a true and a falſe one; we have diſcovered the dangers of this, and ſhewed the excellency and dignity of that. And let nobody think we have loſt our time in treating of theſe things ſo largely; for ſince the goſpel itſelf, which of all ſacred writ is of moſt authority, and which has been left us as the rule to ſquare our lives by, condemns this kind of juſtice ſo often, ſince the prophets, as we have proved, do the ſame, it would have been very ill done if we ſhould have paſſed over this matter ſlightly, which the holy ſcriptures ſo often repeat and inculcate. If the dangers a man is expoſed to lay as open to every body, as rocks that appear above the water in the midſt of the ſeas, there would be no great need of adviſing perſons againſt them; but when they are quite hid from us, it is convenient we ſhould have ſome inſtructions to know how to avoid them, as mariners have their charts to ſhew them whereabouts thoſe ſhelves lie that are quite under water, that they may ſteer their courſe ſo as not to run upon them.

13. Let

13. Let no man deceive himſelf ſaying, ſuch precepts were very neceſſary in former times when this vice was ſo frequent, but that there is not ſo much need of them now-a-days. I am of opinion the world is as bad now as it was then, and that it has almoſt always been in the ſame condition, becauſe when men are the ſame, when human nature is the ſame, when there are the ſame inclinations and the ſame original ſin, which we have all of us been conceived in, and from whence all other ſins draw their riſe, there muſt needs be the ſame offences. For where there is ſo great a proportion between the cauſes of ſin, it is impoſſible there ſhould not be as great a one between the ſins themſelves. So that there are the ſame crimes now in ſuch and ſuch kinds of perſons as there were then; the only difference is, the names are not the ſame; juſt as Plautus or Terence's comedies are the ſame now they were a thouſand years ago, though the players are changed.

14. So that as thoſe ignorant and carnal people thought God was very much obliged to them for their ſacrifices, for their faſts and ſolemnities obſerved, according to the letter only, not according to the ſpirit, there are a great many Chriſtians at preſent who hear Maſs every Sunday, ſay the Office of our Bleſſed Lady or the Roſary every day, faſt every Saturday in honour of her, are always preſent at ſermons, and aſſiſt at the offices of the church; and yet after all, notwithſtanding ſo many actions which are really good, they are as eager in their purſuit of honours, as full bent upon the ſatisfying of their luſts, and as ſubject to anger as other men are that never do any of theſe things. They forget the obligations of their ſtates, they are not at all concerned about the ſalvation of their ſervants and family, they are full of hatred and malice, and will abate nothing of their haughtineſs; they never exerciſe the leaſt degree of humility or patience. Nay, ſome of them go ſo far, and that upon very trivial matters, that they will not ſo much as ſpeak to their neighbour upon any account whatſoever. Others are very backward in paying ſervants their wages, and in diſcharging their debts. And if a man ſhould happen to do or ſay any thing that touches their honour or intereſt, adieu then to all the virtue they had. You will meet with ſome that are very generous and profuſe of their prayers, but they will never put their hands into their pockets to give an alms to the poor. You may find others, that will not for all the world eat fleſh upon Wedneſdays, but they will make no ſcruple of detracting from their neighbour, and will never ſtop at any kind of ſlander or ſcandal when a man's reputation is at ſtake;

ſtake; ſo that whilſt they are ſcrupulouſly afraid of eating the fleſh of beaſts, they have no horror of preying upon that of man, which God has ſo ſtrictly forbid them. For there is ſcarce any thing that a Chriſtian ſhould be ſo much concerned for as the credit or honour of his neighbour; and yet it is what but few take any notice of, though there are many things that are not half ſo important which they are much more ſolicitous about.

15. That theſe and many other ſuch failings are the common practice, not only of the worldly men, but even of thoſe that are retired out of it, is a truth unqueſtionable. And therefore we thought it neceſſary, this miſtake being ſo general, to undeceive ſuch as are fallen into it, eſpecially when thoſe perſons whoſe particular buſineſs it is to take notice of it, neglect their duty entirely in this point. What I have ſaid will, I hope, ſupply this defect, and ſerve as a direction to thoſe that deſire to keep in the right way.

16. And that what we have ſaid may be more profitable to the reader, and he may not grow worſe upon the medicine, it is good to adviſe him in the firſt place to enquire into his own ſpiritual ſtate and condition, that he may ſee what it is he is moſt inclined to. For as there are ſome general inſtructions that ſerve for all ſorts of perſons, as thoſe upon charity, humility, patience, obedience, and the like, there are others again more particular, which are good for ſome, but not ſo for others. As for example, a ſcrupulous perſon ſhould have his conſcience enlarged a little, whereas his, on the contrary, that is too large already, is to be confined and ſtraightened. A man that is ſubject to diffidence and apt to be diſcouraged muſt be put in mind of mercy; whereas the preſumptuous ſhould be frightened with the remembrance of juſtice. The ſame rule is to be obſerved proportionably in other caſes. This is no more than what the author of Eccleſiaſticus adviſes us to, when he ſays, *Talk to the unjuſt man of juſtice, of war to the coward, of gratitude to the ungrateful, of piety to the wicked, and of labour to the idle*, Eccl. xxxvii. 12.

17. Since according to this there are two ſorts of perſons, the one that apply themſelves wholly to interior virtues, and the other that concern themſelves about none but the exterior, it would do well to recommend the exterior virtues to the firſt ſort and the interior to the ſecond, that ſo every one may be brought to a due meaſure and proportion. We have endeavoured all along here to treat every thing with ſuch moderation, that nothing might want the place that is due to it; we

have ſpoken in commendation of greater things without any prejudice to the leſſer, nor have we in extolling theſe leſſened them; and by this means we have avoided thoſe two dangerous rocks, which we have here adviſed others not to ſplit upon, the one, which they run upon who practiſe interior acts, and never mind the exterior; the other they daſh againſt, who are ſo bent upon exterior, as to have no concern at all for the interior, and above all for the fear of God and a hatred of ſin.

18. The main point of all this buſineſs is, to ground ourſelves ſo in the fear of God as to tremble at the very name of ſin. Happy is he that has this virtue deeply rooted in his ſoul; he may build what he pleaſes upon this foundation: but as for him, on the contrary, who is eaſily wrought upon by ſin, let him have all the appearances that can be, he is to look upon himſelf as miſerable, blind and unhappy.

CHAP. VIII.

A ſecond Advice upon the different Ways of Living there are in the Church.

1. OUR ſecond advice is to prevent men paſſing their judgments upon one another, on account of the *different ways of living*. To this purpoſe you muſt underſtand that there being many virtues requiſite to a Chriſtian life, ſome perſons are more addicted to ſome of them, and others to others. For we ſee ſome practiſe thoſe moſt which have God for their immediate object, and theſe perſons apply themſelves for the moſt part to a contemplative life; others eſteem thoſe virtues beſt which make them moſt ſerviceable to their neighbour, and theſe embrace an active life; others again love thoſe beſt which put a man moſt in mind of himſelf, and theſe virtues belong particularly to monaſtical life.

2. Again all virtuous actions being ſo many means for the obtaining of grace, ſome men follow one way and ſome another, for the acquiring of it; ſo that ſome endeavour to obtain it by faſting, diſciplines and other corporal auſterities; ſome by alms and works of mercy; ſome by continual prayer and meditation: in this laſt means the ways are as many as the methods of praying and meditating are different. So that ſome make uſe of this method, and ſome of that, and as there

are

are many things to be meditated upon, there are alſo many ſorts of meditations. Now that ſort is beſt for each particular perſon which he finds moſt profitable, and which ſerves beſt to excite him to devotion.

3. Virtuous perſons are ſubject to a great miſtake as to this point, which is, that they who have profited by any one of theſe means think there is no other way of arriving at God but that which they have gone. They would fain teach all the world the ſame, and look upon thoſe as out of the road who do not go their way, becauſe they imagine it is the only one to get to Heaven. He who is much given to prayer thinks, that without it, it is impoſſible to be ſaved; he that faſts much perſuades himſelf that nothing is to the purpoſe but faſting; he that leads a contemplative life fancies every body elſe to run the hazard of his ſalvation; nay, they carry it ſo far ſometimes as to have no kind of eſteem for an active life. They, on the other ſide, that have made choice of an active life, and for want of having experienced what paſſes betwixt God and the ſoul in the moſt delightful repoſe of contemplation, when they ſee how far they have advanced by their active way of living, leſſen as much as they can the contemplative life, and think there is no perfection without a compoſition of both, as if all the world was to do what they do. A man that makes choice of mental prayer thinks all other kind of prayer unprofitable; and he that loves vocal prayer beſt ſays, that ſince it is more laborious than the other it muſt needs be more meritorious.

4. So that every man crys up his own ware, as ſhop-keepers do, and this without being ſenſible of it, with a hidden pride and ignorance, each of them commends himſelf, by extolling that which he has the greateſt ſtock of. Thus virtues are under the ſame circumſtances as ſciences, of which every one praiſes that he profeſſes, and decries all the reſt. The Orator ſays, there is no art in the world to be compared with rhetoric. The Aſtronomer will tell you, there is no ſcience like that which treats of the heavens and ſtars. The Philoſopher ſays the ſame of his ſcience. He that gives himſelf to the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures ſays much more, and with more reaſon. The Linguiſt ſays almoſt as much as he, becauſe his languages ſerve for the better underſtanding of the ſcripture. The School-divine muſt have the firſt place, or elſe he will not be ſatisfied. In fine, there is none of them all without his weighty reaſons, to make you believe his ſciences better and more neceſſary than the reſt.

5. This which appears ſo plainly in ſciences is to be found in virtues, though it does not lie ſo open, for all lovers of them deſire to chuſe that which is beſt, and ſeek that which ſuits with their inclinations; and therefore think that what fits them beſt is beſt for every body, and what does not agree with them is proper for no body.

6. Hence ſpring the judgments made on other mens lives, and the ſpiritual diviſions and ſchiſms among brethren, one man fancying another in the wrong, for not taking the ſame way he does. It was almoſt ſuch an error the Corinthians lived in. 2 Cor. xii. They had received ſeveral different gifts from God, and every one looked upon his own as the beſt, and therefore they valued themſelves above one another. Some preferring the gift of tongues, others that of propheſy, ſome again that of interpreting the ſcriptures, others the working of miracles, and ſo of the reſt. The beſt remedy that can be given againſt this miſtake is that which the Apoſtle preſcribes them in his Epiſtle againſt that diſtemper. Firſt, he makes all graces and gifts equal as to their origin, aſſuring them they are all ſtreams that flow from the ſame ſpring, which is the Holy Ghoſt; and that as to this point they are all of them alike, though they differ amongſt themſelves: the members of a king's body, are all a king's members and of the blood-royal, though they are not the ſame in reſpect to one another. The Apoſtle ſays to this purpoſe, *We have all been baptized in one ſpirit into one body, by the virtue of which ſpirit we are all made the members of the ſame body.* 1 Cor. xii. 13. So that we all thus far partake of the ſame honour and glory, as being the members of the ſame head. For this reaſon the Apoſtle adds immediately after: *If the foot ſhould ſay, becauſe I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it not therefore of the body? And if the ear ſhould ſay, becauſe I am not the eye, I am not of the body: is it not therefore of the body?* Ibid. 15, 16. It is plain then that as to this we are all equal, becauſe of the unity and fraternity that is in all, notwithſtanding the diverſity which is in us at the ſame time.

7. The cauſe of which is partly nature, and partly grace; we ſay it ariſes from nature, becauſe, though every ſpiritual being owes its beginning to grace, yet grace, like water, received into ſeveral veſſels takes ſeveral ſhapes, agreeable to the nature and condition of every one. For ſome perſons are naturally eaſy and quiet, and therefore more fit for a contemplative life, others are more choleric and active, and therefore an active life is beſt for them; others are more ſtrong and healthful,

healthful, and leſs in love with themſelves, ſo that a laborious penitential life agrees beſt with them. God's goodneſs diſplays itſelf in all theſe particulars much to our admiration; for he, deſigning to communicate himſelf to all, has been pleaſed to propoſe ſeveral ways to us, for our partaking of this favour, according to the ſeveral conditions of men, that ſo he that cannot go one way may try another.

8. The ſecond cauſe of this variety is grace; becauſe the Holy Ghoſt, who is the author of it, has thought fit to have this variety in thoſe that belong to him, for the greater perfection and beauty of the church. For as ſeveral members and ſenſes are required to the making of a man's body perfect and beautiful, ſo there muſt be a great many virtues and graces to make the church ſo too. For if the faithful were all alike in this reſpect, how could they be called a body, *If the whole body* (ſays St. Paul) *ſhould be eyes, where would the hearing be? If it ſhould all be hearing, where would the ſmelling be?* Ibid. 17. God has, for this reaſon, thought fit there ſhould be ſeveral members in one body, that ſo multiplicity and unity meeting together there might be proportion betwixt ſeveral things in one; and hence comes the perfection and beauty we ſee in the church. Thus we ſee there muſt be this ſame diverſity of voices, yet with concord, that ſo it may be ſweet and harmonious; for if the voices were all of the ſame pitch, if they were all trebles, or all baſes, or all tenors, how could they make muſic and harmony.

9. The ſame thing appears to our wonder, even in the works of nature, in which the ſovereign artiſt has intermixed ſo much variety, by giving every creature its particular qualities and perfections, and has ſhewn ſo much juſtice in the diſtribution of them, that though each particular creature has ſome kind of advantage or other upon all the reſt, yet they do not envy one another, becauſe if any of them is outdone in ſome things it excels in others. The peacock is beautiful to the eye, but not delightful to the ear; the nightingale on the other ſide charms the ear, but does not pleaſe the eye; the horſe is good for the race and the camp, but not for the table; the ox is good for the table and plow, and fit for nothing elſe; fruit-trees produce what is good for eating, but are not ſo fit for building as thoſe trees are which bear no fruit. Thus in all things together we find all things diſperſed, but never all together in any one thing; that by this means the beauty and variety of the univerſe may be preſerved, and the different ſpecies of things may continue, and they may all be

be linked to one another by a mutual and neceſſary dependence.

10. The ſame order and beauty that is in the works of nature God has thought fit ſhould be in thoſe of grace, and for this reaſon he has, by his ſpirit, ordered ſuch a variety of virtues and graces in his church, that all of them might make a moſt harmonious concord, a moſt perfect world, and a moſt beautiful body compoſed of different members. We may ſee the effects of this variety in the different ſtates of men in the church, where ſome give themſelves up to a contemplative life, and others to an active; ſome apply themſelves to works of obedience, others to penance; ſome to prayer, and others to ſinging; ſome to ſtudy, that they may be profitable to others; ſome to looking after the ſick and viſiting of hoſpitals; ſome to relieve the poor and miſerable; ſome to one kind of good exerciſe, and ſome to another.

11. The ſame variety is to be found in religious houſes. Though they all take the road that leads to Heaven, yet they do not go all the ſame way. Some take the way of poverty, others of penance; ſome go by the exerciſe of a contemplative life, and others by thoſe of an active; ſome labour for the good of the public, whilſt others retire as far from it as they can. Some have revenues by the rules of their inſtitution, others love poverty better; ſome run into the deſerts, and others into cities and towns; and all this out of the motives of religion and charity.

12. We may obſerve this variety again, not only in the orders and monaſteries, but in the particular members of the ſame, ſo that ſome are employed in ſinging in the choir, others in manual labour; ſome are ſtudying in their cells, others are hearing confeſſions in the church, and others are abroad about the affairs of the houſe. What is all this but ſeveral members in one body, and ſeveral voices in one concert, that ſo there may be an exact proportion and beauty in the church. There is no other reaſon for putting a great many ſtrings to the ſame lute, and a great many pipes into the ſame organ, but to make the muſic more pleaſant by the variety of the ſounds. This is the coat of ſeveral colours which the patriarch Jacob made for his ſon Joſeph. And ſuch were the curtains of the tabernacles which God commanded Moſes to paint and ſet out with wonderful variety and beauty. Gen. xxxvii. Exod. xxvi. xxxvi.

13. If ſo, and it is convenient it ſhould be ſo, for the beauty and order of the church, why do we not lay aſide the vicious cuſtom we have got of detracting from our neighbours, of paſſing

paſſing ſentence upon their actions, and of making ourſelves judges over other men, becauſe they do not do what we do? This is deſtroying the body of the church, rending Joſeph's coat, diſturbing and ſpoiling the harmony of the heavenly muſic: it is like deſiring that the members of the church ſhould be all feet, or all hands, or all eyes, but if all the body were eyes, where would the ears be; and if all were ears what would become of the eyes?

14. Thus you ſee how great a miſtake it is to blame another, becauſe he has not what I have, or cannot do what I do; as it would be in the eyes to deſpiſe the feet for not ſeeing, or the feet to find fault with the eyes for not walking, and bearing the whole burden upon them. For it is requiſite the feet ſhould take pains, and the eyes ſhould always be at reſt, that the former ſhould be always upon the ground, and the latter above them, free from duſt or any thing that may ſully them. Nor are the eyes, notwithſtanding their continual repoſe, leſs ſerviceable to the body than the feet that takes ſo much pains. As the ſteerſman in a veſſel that ſtands at the helm, with his compaſs before him, does as much good as they that are always upon deck or hawling the ropes, that look after the ſails or that ſtand at the pump. On the contrary, he that we think does leaſt in reality does moſt, becauſe it is not the labour that is taken about a thing, but the value of the thing in itſelf, together with the importance of it, that makes it more or leſs excellent; unleſs we will ſay, that a laborious plowman, for example, does the commonwealth more ſervice than a diſcreet and prudent ſtateſman, becauſe of the two he works the hardeſt.

15. He that conſiders this ſeriouſly will leave every one to his calling, that is, he will let the foot be a foot, and the hand be ſtill a hand, and will never deſire that the body ſhould be all foot or all hand. This is what the Apoſtle endeavours to perſuade us all to in the epiſtle above-cited; and it is the advice he gives us in theſe words: *Let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth*; becauſe he that eats may perhaps ſtand in need of what he eats, and be endowed with ſome nobler virtue than yours is, and which you want. So that he is not to be blamed by you for eating, ſince in all appearance his other virtue may make him better than you are. For as in muſic thoſe notes that are upon the lines are as good as thoſe that are betwixt them, ſo he that eats diſturbs the harmony and concord of the church no more than he that abſtains; nor he that ſeems to do nothing at all any more than he that

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is always employed, if he ſpends his leiſure time ſo as to endeavour to make himſelf ſerviceable to his neighbour hereafter.

16. St. Bernard adviſes us againſt this ſame fault, when he ſays, "That none ought to examine into another man's way of life, to paſs judgment upon it, but thoſe that are judges and rulers in the church; much leſs is a man to put another perſon's life in the ſame ſcale with his own, for fear it ſhould happen to him as it did to a certain monk, who being troubled to have his poverty compared with Gregory's riches, heard a voice which told him, he was much richer in a cat he had than the other with all his wealth." Serm. 4. in Cantica.

CHAP. IX.

The third Advice of the Vigilance and Care every virtuous Man ought to live with.

1. HAVING propoſed in this rule ſo many different virtues, and given ſo many inſtructions upon the regulating of our lives, our next advice is, to endeavour to procure one general virtue, which may comprehend, and as far as is poſſible to ſupply, the want of the reſt; this is the rather adviſable, becauſe our underſtanding is ſuch that it cannot conceive many things at once. This virtue is a perpetual *ſolicitude* and *vigilance*, and a continual attention to whatſoever we do or ſay, that ſo every thing may be brought to the rule and moderation of reaſon.

2. We are to behave ourſelves in this point like an ambaſſador that is to ſpeak to a ſovereign prince. He has his attention fixed upon the matter he is to diſcourſe of, he weighs every word he ſpeaks, he manages the tone of his voice, and conſiders every poſture and motion of his body, and this all at the ſame time. Thus he that ſerves God ſhould uſe his utmoſt endeavours to be always watchful and attentive upon himſelf, to conſider himſelf and all he does, ſo that whether he ſpeaks or holds his tongue, whether he aſks a queſtion or gives an anſwer, whether at table, in the ſtreet, or in the church, at home or abroad, he is to have his rule and compaſs always with him, to meaſure every action, every word, nay, every thought, that ſo all may be exact to the law of God, to the judgment of reaſon and to decency. For the diſtance

tance betwixt good and evil being ſo great, and God having given our ſouls a natural knowledge of both, there is ſcarce any man ſo ignorant, but, if he weighs what he does, will more or leſs diſcover what he ought to do, and therefore this attention and ſolicitude is as ſerviceable as all the inſtructions of this rule, and many more.

3. This is the care the Holy Ghoſt recommended to us, when he ſaid, *Watch carefully over yourſelf, O man, and over your own ſoul!* And the leaſt of the three advices the Prophet Micah gave us, as we have obſerved already, was, *to walk carefully with God*, which is to be ſolicitous, to do nothing in contradiction to his will, Mic. vi. 8. The many eyes Ezechiel's myſterious animals had teach us what vigilance and care we ſhould uſe in this battle, where our enemies are ſo numerous, and we have ſo much to attend to, Ezek. i. The ſame is repreſented to us by the poſture of the ſeventy ſtout men that guarded Solomon's bed. They had their ſwords upon their thighs ready to draw, to expreſs how watchful and ready he muſt be who walks in the very midſt of ſo many enemies, Cant. iii.

4. Beſides the many dangers we are expoſed to, another reaſon for this extraordinary vigilance is, the niceneſs and conſequence of this buſineſs, eſpecially to thoſe who aſpire to the perfection of a ſpiritual life. For to behave ourſelves and to live as God would have us, to preſerve ourſelves from all the ſtains and ſpots of this world, to live in this fleſh without the corruptions of it, *to keep ourſelves free from reproof till the day of Chriſt*, as the Apoſtle ſays, are things ſo high and ſo far above the reach of nature, that we ſtand in need of all theſe and many more helps, and even of the aſſiſtance of God's grace, Phil. i. 10.

5. Conſider how attentive a man is when he is upon any nice curious work; for it is certain this is the niceſt work, and requires moſt attention. Obſerve how cautiouſly a man walks that carries a glaſs brimful of ſome precious liquor for fear of ſpilling; think of a man that is forced to croſs a river upon ſtones that are not conveniently placed, how carefully he treads, for fear he ſhould fall in and be drowned. But above all, conſider how cautiouſly a rope-dancer ſets every ſtep, how ſteadily he keeps his eye, for fear of tottering and falling one way or other. Do you always endeavour to carry yourſelf with the ſame circumſpection, eſpecially at firſt, till it become habitual, ſo as not to ſpeak a word, entertain the leaſt thought, or make any motion that may, if poſſible, deviate

viate from the line of virtue. Seneca adviſes us to this by an example as profitable as it is familiar. "A man (ſays he) that has a mind to acquire virtue, muſt imagine himſelf to be always in the preſence of ſome great perſon he has a veneration for, and endeavour to do and ſay every thing juſt as he would if that perſon were really preſent." Epiſt. 25.

6. Another way, no leſs proper than the former, is, to think we have no longer to live than the preſent day; and ſo to behave ourſelves as if we were really perſuaded we ſhould appear that ſame night before the tribunal of Chriſt, to give him an account of our whole life.

7. But the beſt way of all is, to walk always, as much as poſſibly we can, in the preſence of Almighty God, to ſet him always before our eyes (for he is truly preſent every where), and to perform all our actions, as having ſo great a Majeſty for the witneſs and judge of whatſoever we do, begging his grace to carry ourſelves ſo as may beſt become his Divine preſence. This attention, which we adviſe to here, ſhould have two ends; the one of conſidering God interiorly, of walking before him, of adoring him, of praiſing and reverencing, loving and thanking him, and of offering a ſacrifice of devotion to him upon the altar of our hearts; the other is, to reflect upon every word or action, and to ſee that nothing be done or ſaid to the prejudice of virtue. We ſhould have one eye always fixed upon God to beg his grace, and the other always caſt down upon ourſelves, to ſee what it is becomes us moſt, and to direct us in employing our lives to the beſt advantage. We are to make uſe of the light God has given us, firſt to obſerve thoſe things that refer to God, and next to correct and perfect our own actions, meditating ſeriouſly upon God and upon the extent of our own duties. And though this is not always practicable, we muſt endeavour yet to do it as often and as long as we can; for this kind of attention is no hinderance to our corporal exerciſes. The heart, on the contrary, will by this means have the frequent opportunity of ſtealing off in the very heat of temporal engagements and buſineſs, and of hiding itſelf in the wounds of Jeſus Chriſt. The importance of this inſtruction is ſuch that it has obliged me to repeat it, though I have given it before in the Memorial of a Chriſtian Life.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The fourth Advice of the Fortitude requiſite to the obtaining of Virtue.

1. THE foregoing advice has furniſhed us with eyes to ſee our duty. This will find us arms, that is, *fortitude*, to perform it. For ſince there are in virtue two difficulties, the firſt whereof conſiſts in diſtinguiſhing betwixt good and bad, and ſeparating the one from the other; the ſecond in overcoming of the bad, and in the purſuing of the good; attention and watchfulneſs are neceſſary for that, and diligence and fortitude for this; and if either of theſe two be wanting our virtue will be imperfect, for either it will be blind, if there is no attention, or elſe impotent, if fortitude be wanting.

2. This fortitude is not the ſame whoſe part it is to moderate boldneſs and fear, which is one of the four cardinal virtues, but a general fortitude neceſſary for the overcoming of all thoſe difficulties that may lie in our way to virtue. To this end it always goes along with it, with ſword in hand, and makes way for it whereſoever it goes. Becauſe virtue, according to the philoſophers, is a hard and difficult thing; and therefore it is convenient it ſhould always have this fortitude by it to aſſiſt it in breaking through theſe difficulties. For as a ſmith is always to have his hammer in his hand, becauſe of the hardneſs of the metal he is to work upon, ſo this fortitude is like a ſpiritual hammer, which a good man is never to be without, if he deſigns to overcome the difficulty he ſhall meet with in virtue. So that as a ſmith without his hammer can do nothing, neither can he who is in purſuit of virtue, if he has not this fortitude to aſſiſt him. To prove this, what virtue is there that has not ſome particular labour and hardſhip in it? Take which of them you pleaſe, you will find it ſo. Prayer, faſting, obedience, temperance, poverty of ſpirit, patience, chaſtity, humility, all of them, in ſhort, have ever ſome difficulty or other joined with them, ariſing either from ſelf-love, from the world or the devil. If then this fortitude be taken away, what will the love of virtue be able to do when it is diſarmed and left naked? Thus you ſee that without this virtue the reſt are bound, as it were, hand and foot, and can do nothing for themſelves.

3. Whoſoever therefore you are that deſire to improve yourſelf in virtue, look upon theſe words which the Lord of all

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virtues and ſtrength ſpoke formerly to Moſes, though in another ſenſe, as directed to you: *Take this rod in your hand, for with it you ſhall do wonders and miracles, by which you ſhall bring my people out of Egypt*, Exod. iv. 17. Aſſure yourſelf that as his rod was the inſtrument of all thoſe wonders, and that which put an end to ſo glorious an enterpriſe, ſo this rod of fortitude is that which muſt overcome all the difficulties that either the love of the fleſh or the devil ſhall lay in your way, and it is by this you are to bring off your undertaking with ſucceſs. And therefore let it never be out of your hand, for if you once lay it down you will not be able to do any of theſe wonders.

4. Therefore I think fit, in this place, to give notice of a great error thoſe that begin to ſerve God are apt to fall into; they having read in ſome pious books how great the conſolations and delights of the Holy Ghoſt are, and how ſweet and delightful charity is, perſuade themſelves immediately that there is nothing but pleaſure in the way to virtue, without any mixture of labour and pains. And therefore they prepare themſelves for it as if it were an eaſy and pleaſant undertaking, ſo that they do not think of arming themſelves for a fight, but of dreſſing for ſome public entertainment. They never conſider, that though the love of God is ſweet in itſelf, there is a great deal of bitterneſs before a man can get to it; for firſt of all, ſelf-love muſt be overcome, a man muſt fight againſt himſelf, and what war ſo hard as this is? Iſaiah told us of the neceſſity of both: *Shake the duſt off from you*, (ſays he) *O Jeruſalem, riſe up, and ſit down*, Iſa. lii. 2. There is no trouble, it is true, in ſitting down, but there is a great deal in ſhaking off the duſt of earthly affections, and in riſing from the ſleep of ſin. This is what we muſt do before we are to think of enjoying the reſt, which the Prophet means by *ſitting down*.

5. It is likewiſe true that God has great comforts in ſtore for thoſe that work hard, and for all ſuch as have parted with the pleaſures of this world for thoſe of Heaven. But unleſs this exchange be made, and if man will not let go what he holds, he may aſſure himſelf this refreſhment will not be granted him. For we know the children of Iſrael had not manna given them in the wilderneſs till they had ſpent all the flower they carried out of Egypt.

6. But to come home to our ſubject; thoſe perſons who will not arm themſelves with this fortitude muſt account upon what they look for as loſt, and never think of finding it unleſs they

they change their affections and alter their ways of proceeding. They may be assured that rest is purchased by labour, the victory by fighting, joy by tears, and the most delightful love of God by self-hatred. This is the reason why laziness and sloth are so often condemned in the Proverbs, whereas fortitude and diligence are so highly commended, as we have shewn elsewhere; for the Holy Ghost, who is the author of this doctrine, knew very well that the one was no small hinderance to virtue, and the other forwarded it as much. Treatise of Prayer, p. 2. c. 2. §. 2.

SECTION I.

Of the Means of acquiring this Fortitude.

7. You will ask me perhaps what the means are for obtaining of this fortitude, which is no less difficult than other virtues. For the Wise Man had reason to begin his alphabet that is so full of Divine instructions with this sentence: *Who has found a strong woman? She is to be valued more than all treasures and precious stones that are brought from the farthest parts of the earth*, Prov. xxxi. 10. What means then must we use to find out so inestimable a thing as this is? We must first consider what this value is, because that which contributes to the purchasing so immense a treasure as that of virtue is, must certainly itself be of no small esteem. For what can be the reason why worldly men fly so fast from virtue, but the difficulty cowards and lazy persons find in it? The slothful man says, *There is a lion in the way; I shall be killed in the middle of the street*, Prov. xxii. 13. And the same Wise Man says in another place, *The fool stands with his arms across, and says, a little with ease is much better than the handful with affliction and labour*, Eccl. iv. 5, 6. Since therefore there is nothing that frightens us from virtue but the difficulty of it, if we can gather strength to overcome this difficulty, the conquest of the whole kingdom of virtues follow. Is there any man that will not take courage, and endeavour to acquire this fortitude, upon the acquisition of which depends the making ourselves masters of the kingdom of virtue, and consequently of that of Heaven, which is to be gained by those only that use violence. This same fortitude overcomes self-love, with all its assistants; and when once we have routed this enemy, the love of God, or, to speak more properly, God himself comes in its place. Since, according

to St. John, *He that remains in charity remains in God*, Matt. xi. 12.

8. Another thing that is a great help to us is the good example of ſo many holy men as are in the world, poor, naked, barefoot, pale, and worn out with watching and faſting, and deprived of all the conveniencies of this life. Some of whom are ſo deſirous of labours and mortifications, and ſo much in love with them, that, as merchants run to great fairs, and ſcholars to the moſt flouriſhing univerſities, ſo they run up and down from monaſtery to monaſtery, from province to province, in ſearch of greater auſterities and rigours, where they find no food, but hunger; no riches, but poverty; no eaſe, but the croſs and perpetual macerations. What can be more oppoſite to the practice of the world and to the inclinations of the greater part of mankind, than for a man to go into ſtrange countries to find out a way to ſuffer more hunger, to be poorer, worſe cloathed, and more naked than he was before? This certainly is repugnant to fleſh and blood, but extremely conſonant to the Spirit of God.

9. But what condemns our eaſe moſt is the example of ſo many martyrs, who have undergone ſuch different and cruel kinds of deaths, for the purchaſing of the kingdom of Heaven. There is not a day paſſes in the whole year but we have the examples of ſome of them ſet before us by the church, not only to celebrate their memories by the feaſts it inſtitutes in honour of them, but to profit by imitation of thoſe virtues they were ſo famous for. One day we have the example of a martyr that was broiled, another day of one that was impaled alive, another day of one that was thrown into the ſea, another of one that was caſt down headlong from a rock, another of one that had his fleſh torn off with red-hot pincers, another of one that was pulled limb from limb, another of one that was cut, as it were, in furrows, another of one that was ſhot to death with arrows, another of one that was boiled in a caldron of oil, with an infinity of other torments they were put to. Nay, ſeveral of them have undergone, not one ſort of torment only, but all that human nature could poſſibly ſuffer. How many have been carried from priſon to the whipping-poſt, from the whipping-poſt to the ſtake, from thence to be torn with iron hooks, and after all have died by the ſword, which was very often the only inſtrument that could take their lives away, but yet could not hurt their faith nor daunt their courage.

10. What ſhall I ſay of the cruel devices and inventions, not of men but of devils, to attack the faith and fortitude of the ſpirits,

ſpirits, by the torture of the bodies. Some, after having been barbarouſly flaſhed and wounded, were laid upon beds of nettles and ſharp pieces of tiles and ſtones, that whilſt they lay there all the parts of their bodies might be wounded at once, and that no member might be free from pain, and their faith thus aſſaulted by an army of unheard-of torments. Others they made walk barefoot over hot coals, and tied others to wildhorſes tails, and ſo dragged them through briars and over flint ſtones. They had a dreadful invention for others of a wheel that was covered all over with ſharp razors, that ſo the body that was faſtened to it might, upon the motion of the wheel, be cut to pieces by the rows of razors ſet in it. Others were ſtretched out upon wooden horſes, and as they lay in this poſture, with their bodies tied faſt down, the executioner made great furrows in their fleſh from head to foot with iron hooks. Nor could the cruelty of thoſe tyrants be ſatisfied with ſuch barbarous torments, their fury made them invent another ſtrange one, which was, to bend down the branches of two great trees with all the force they could, and to tie the martyrs to them by the feet, that ſo flying up again with more violence they might pull the body of the ſaint into two pieces, and each branch carry one half along with it. There was a certain martyr in Nicomedia, and afterwards a great many were put to the ſame kind of torments, that had been whipped ſo barbarouſly, that not only his ſkin but the greateſt part of his fleſh was torn off, ſo that his very bones might be ſeen through holes they had made with their whips; when they had done this they waſhed his wounds with vinegar, and ſprinkled them over with ſalt, and not thinking this enough, becauſe they ſaw the Saint was not dead yet, they laid him along upon a gridiron over a fire, and there turned him from one ſide to the other with iron forks, till the holy body being ſcorched and broiled, the ſoul left it, and went immediately to God. Thus death itſelf, which is ſaid to be of all things the moſt terrible, has been in ſome manner outdone by theſe barbarous tormentors, becauſe their deſign was not ſo much to kill as to torture, by inflicting the moſt cruel pains they could think of, ſo as to force the ſoul to leave the body by the extremity of the ſufferings it endured, though they had received no wounds that were mortal.

11. Theſe martyrs had the ſame kind of bodies that we have, the ſubſtance was the ſame, the compoſition the ſame; they had the very ſame God to aſſiſt them that we have; nor was the glory they expected different from that which we look for. Now if theſe perſons underwent ſuch ſevere tor-

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ments and ſuch cruel deaths for obtaining of eternal life, ſhall we refuſe to mortify the irregular deſires of our fleſh for the ſame end? Shall we grudge to faſt one day when theſe holy men have died for hunger? Why ſhall we think it much to ſay a few prayers upon our knees with devotion, when we ſee theſe ſaints have continued to pray for their enemies, though they were nailed to the croſs? Why ſhall we be unwilling to mortify and retrench our deſires and paſſions a little, when theſe perſons have ſo cheerfully given their limbs to be cut and torn in pieces? Why ſhould we be againſt the taking of a little time every day to retire ourſelves into our cloſets, to meditate there, when theſe men have been ſhut up ſo long in dark priſons and dungeons? And if theſe, in fine have held down their back to be ploughed up and furrowed, why ſhall we grudge to take a diſcipline now and then upon ours, for the love of Chriſt.

12. But if theſe examples cannot move us, let us lift up our eyes towards the ſacred wood of the croſs, let us conſider who it is that hangs upon it, in the greateſt pain and torment imaginable, for the love of us. *Conſider him* (ſays St. Paul) *that endured ſuch contradictions from ſinners, for fear you ſhould be tired and loſe courage*, Heb. xii. 3. This is a ſurprizing example; take it which way you will: For if you conſider his ſufferings they could not have poſſibly been greater; if the perſon that ſuffered them, there can be no greater or nobler; if the reaſon of his ſuffering, you will find it was for no crime of his own, he being innocence itſelf; nor for any neceſſity he was in, becauſe he is Lord of all created beings. It was only an effect of pure goodneſs and love. And notwithſtanding his being ſo great, he underwent ſuch bitter torments, both in his body and in his ſoul, that all the ſufferings of the martyrs and of the whole together are not fit to be put into the balance with them. His torments were ſuch that the very Heavens were aſtoniſhed at them, the earth ſhook, the rocks were rent aſunder, and the moſt ſenſeleſs beings were ſenſible of them. And can man then alone be ſo hard as not to be wrought upon by that which moved the very elements, and can he be ſo ungrateful as not to copy ſomething from him who came into the world to give him an example? For this reaſon, as our Saviour himſelf ſaid, *It was requiſite that Chriſt ſhould die, and ſo enter into his glory*, Luke xxiv. 16. For, after his coming into the world, to conduct us to Heaven, which was to be done by the way of the croſs, it was convenient that he himſelf ſhould be crucified the firſt, that ſo the ſervant,

ſeeing

ſeeing the Maſter ſo ill dealt with, might have the better courage to ſuffer.

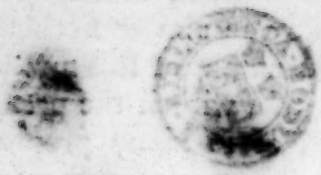
13. Who then can be ſo ungrateful, ſo delicate, ſo proud, or ſo impudent, as to deſire to go to Heaven by living at his eaſe and pleaſure, when he ſees the Lord of majeſty, with all his friends and followers, take ſo much pains to get thither? King David commanded Urias, after his coming from the camp, to take his eaſe and refreſh himſelf at his own houſe, and to ſup with his wife; but the loyal ſubject replied, *The ark of God, and Iſrael, and Judah, are in their tents; and my maſter Joab, and my Lord's ſervants, are in the open field, and ſhall I then go to my houſe to eat and drink, and lie with my wife? By your life, and by the life of your ſoul, I will not do this thing*, 2 Reg. xi. 11. O true and faithful ſervant, who were as worthy of praiſe as you were unworthy of death. How can you, O Chriſtian, chuſe but have the ſame reſpect for your Lord when you ſee him ſtretched out on the croſs? The ark of God, that is made of incorruptible cedar, undergoes torments and death itſelf, and do you ſeek your own eaſe and pleaſure? This ark, in which the hidden manna was kept, which is the bread of angels, drank gall and vinegar for you, and do you hunt after your ſweet morſels and delicacies? This ark, in which the tables of the law were kept, which are all the treaſures of the wiſdom and knowledge of God, is deſpiſed and eſteemed no better than folly, and do you aim at nothing leſs than honour and praiſe? But if the example of this myſtical ark is not ſufficient to confound you, take with it the patterns and the ſufferings of ſo many ſaints, of ſo many prophets, martyrs, confeſſors and virgins, who have undergone ſuch pains and torments, and have lived in ſuch rigours and auſterities. The Apoſtle give us a ſhort view of their ſufferings, in theſe words: *They have been mocked, they have been ſcourged, and put into chains and priſons. They have been ſtoned, they have been ſawn aſunder, they have been tempted, they have been ſlain with the ſword, they have wandered about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in wilderneſſes, over mountains, in dens, and in caverns of the earth*, Heb. xi. 36, 37, 38. and yet amidſt all theſe miſeries they remained unſhaken and conſtant in their faith.

14. If the ſaints led ſuch lives, and if, what is much more yet, the Saint of Saints himſelf lived no otherwiſe, I cannot ſee what privilege they claim, nor what they propoſe to themſelves, who think of going where theſe are now, in a road of

delights and pleasures. If therefore you desire to share with them in their glory, you must, whilst you are here, partake of their labours; if you intend to reign with them hereafter, you must resolve upon nothing less than suffering with them now.

15. What I have here said is to exhort you to this noble virtue of fortitude, that so you may imitate that holy soul, of whom Solomon has given us this commandment: *She hath girded her loins with strength, and has fortified her arms*, Prov. xxxi. 17.

I will conclude this chapter and the doctrine of this second book with that excellent sentence of our Saviour: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me*, Luke ix. 23. Our Divine Master has here given us an abridgment, in a few words, of the whole doctrine of the gospel, the design of which is, the forming of a perfect and an evangelical man, who, though he enjoys a kind of paradise within, is nevertheless continually stretched upon a cross without, so that the sweetness of the one tempers the bitterness of the other, and the pleasure he finds in the one makes him willingly embrace the toils and hardships he is to expect from the other.



FINIS.